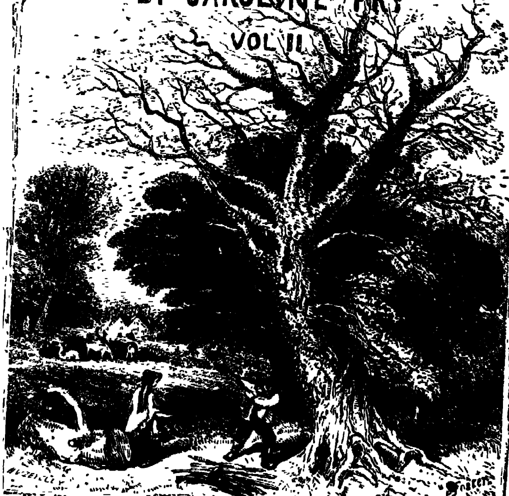
THE LISTENER.

THE LISTENER

BY CAROLINE FRY

VOL. II.



JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

THE LISTENER.

BY

CAROLINE FRY,

AUTHOR OF

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THE LISTENER.

No. XXIV.

SCHOOL EDUCATION.

If we can succeed in showing the mother that she has left a duty unperformed towards her infant—a duty of paramount importance—yea, one of far greater consequence than those even which she so assiduously performs for its bodily comfort; if we can convince her that any of the bad passions which agitate, the evil dispositions which deform, and the vicious inclinations which degrade, the human character, are under her control, are attributable to her neglect, and may be prevented by her exertions; she will no longer be idle, she will no longer be negligent and indifferent as to the moral health of her offspring.

Mother's Magazine.

As soon as a group of little creatures peep out from the nursery, every body asks the mother how she means to educate them; and she, with maternal anxiety, begins to inquire for the best method. For some it is determined that they have governesses, some are to be sent to school, some are to be taught by masters, and some are to get their education piecemeal, and by accident, in any way that may

happen; which, I have been surprised to observe, often proves, in the end, a very good one. As to which of these modes of education is the best, volumes large, and volumes many, have been written; and our most partial readers would not, I believe, petition for another, even of six pages, were there not a point of view in which the subject is not, to my knowledge, sufficiently considered. There is yet room for discussion on the subject, "How should a *Christian* mother educate her children?" for it cannot be that the same answer should be given where that adjective is subjoined, and where it is omitted. It cannot be, that to ends so opposite, the same path should be the most direct. When a boy is to be brought up to the church, he is not sent to Sandhurst; neither, when destined to the sea, is he sent to Oxford. If, therefore, there be two masters, two services, two worlds, so distinct and separate as the Scriptures throughout describe them, there must be some difference in the mode of preparation for them. The boy sent to Sandhurst may, when he becomes a man, choose to go into the church; and the man educated at Oxford may take it into his head to go to sea; but this is not in the parents' contemplation —they have an object, and pursue the most likely means to attain it. The child of the Christian mother may turn out careless, thoughtless, unbelieving, and choose the service for which she was not designed—for genuine piety goes not by inheritance, nor of the bequest of man; but the Christian mo-

ther does not intend this, does not prepare for this bad preference. And if, at the baptismal font, she have really devoted her child to be a child of God and a servant of Christ, with ardent prayer and honest wish that the vow should be fulfilled, it is impossible her view of education, and the manner in which she calculates the advantages of the various modes of it, can be exactly the same, as if she considers that ceremony an established farce, and would be very sorry that her child should fulfil its promises. If, therefore, I write my sentiments upon the best mode of educating girls, it is for *Christian* mothers; to them only, my observations apply—for I am satisfied they cannot, in every point at least, be equally applicable to all.

Travelling, last autumn, leisurely and for amusement, in the West of England, by one of those casualties that so often give beginning to the most intimate and lasting friendship, I became acquainted with a gentleman travelling the same road, though not on the same errand—I was wandering away from my home, he was making haste to return to his. After much of that preluding sort of intercourse which usually makes the first chapter of a story so very interesting, I received an invitation to make his house one stage upon my journey, and remain a few days there, to see what was worthy of observation in the neighbourhood. I did so; and whatever I did or did not see without—for that makes nothing to my story—I was most highly satisfied with all I

found within. I scarcely need draw a picture of which the original may be seen in every town or province of our happy country—the picture of domestic enjoyment and grateful prosperity. By prosperity, I do not mean Wealth revelling in her halls of luxury, amid the plenitude of unrestrained expenditure, but that secure sufficiency, which speculating avarice does not reach, and ostentatious splendour does not waste; which hundreds do enjoy, and hundreds might who do not, were their desires more reasonable, and their hearts more grateful.

If there was nothing in the residence of my friend that bespoke unlimited resources, nothing splendid or costly, it is impossible to imagine a comfort that there was not. Though not far from a large town, the extensive shrubbery that encompassed the house, and closed it from the road, gave to it a fictitious air of loneliness and seclusion, the more delightful, perhaps, that it was not a reality. My friend was a grave and sensible man, one in whose company you could not pass an hour without perceiving a mind of no common cultivation, under the immediate and habitual influence of the strongest religious principle. His lady was cheerful, rational, it seemed to me accomplished and well-read, with remarkable kindness and simplicity of manners. Their days were spent in that sort of busy leisure, in which no one being actually compelled to do anything, has yet, in the sense of duty, a stronger impulse to activity than any necessity could supply. When the morning-bell

rang for prayers, about half-a-dozen servants made their appearance, with cheerful faces, and received, in few words, the kindly instructions of their master. The breakfast hour passed in rational discourse, or the discussion of family matters; my friend went either to his study, or to some business in the town or in the country, that took up great part of his morning: the lady was occupied, as most, *not idle* ladies are, with a great many different things—books, work, household affairs, the calls of friendship, and the claims of benevolence. At dinner, in the evening, whether it was in the society of a few cultivated and agreeable friends, or in the perusal of popular works, or the chat about men and things—I do not mean scandal—time passed with equal and untroubled wings, till the day's work ended as it began, in the assembling of the family to prayers; as if to forget all distinctions where all are equal, and lose, in contemplation of eternity, the factitious differences of time and circumstance. Peace, holiness, and love, had their dwelling there; nor dwelt there only for the comfort of the family themselves. There the ignorant had instruction and advice, the hungry had food, and the naked clothing. At a certain hour of the week-day, I saw the lady go out to visit establishments of charity, that needed, as she told me, the personal attention of those who supported them, as persons acting for hire seldom did their duty or understood it. At a certain hour on the Sunday, I saw a number of half-grown girls assembled in her

hall, to be instructed by herself. In conversation with her husband, I heard her speak of Polly Thomson and Betty Wilson, and Jemmy Butler, as if she knew all the children's characters and propensities, and was making it her business to watch over their welfare day by day, checking the growth of ill, and encouraging every promise of good. The gentleman took me to the schools he had established, where I observed that he called every child by its name, and spoke to it in a manner that implied a personal knowledge of its temper and condition. He sometimes talked apart with the teachers, with an earnestness that proved he did not think it enough to hire and to pay, without knowing how the duty was performed. I do not wish to write a story—imagine all the rest. Consider, for you know, how many well-beneficed clergy, many professional or independent gentlemen, many wealthy retired tradesmen, live and pass their time, and scatter blessings around them. For my part, I envied the very servants in the house: for they, even to the stable-boy, seemed objects of kindness and parental care; as if their employers held themselves responsible for their present comfort and their eternal welfare, so far as by human means either could be promoted.

It was the second evening of my visit, that, sitting with my friends alone, intent on the growth of the just-lighted fire, whose gay crackling made one rejoice that the chill of an autumn evening had afforded excuse for lighting it, I remarked on what I had seen,

and added—a sort of compliment that needed no sacrifice of truth—that the neighbouring poor were favoured by Providence, in that, having no children of their own, it had disposed their hearts to become the parents of all around them. The lady smiled, and asked why I thought they had no children. Certainly I had no reason to think so, except the want of a reason to think otherwise: and not immediately replying, she added, "Our two girls are gone to school for some years in London, and our boy is at Eton." I had started a fruitful theme—a mother's tongue will rarely wear it out. She spoke of her girls' affections—of the tears they shed at parting—of her longing anticipation of their return. Once I interrupted her, to ask why she parted from them. "It was for their good—for the advantage of better masters—that they might mix with other girls—that they might not be without the advantages others have whose parents live more in the world. She could not be so selfish as to deprive them of these, for the sake of sparing herself this painful separation."

I am more disposed to listen than to talk: but it passed over my mind that had I a child, to have it brought up in such a house as this, I would pay double what they pay to send theirs out of it. I had not heard there a single word I should not wish my child to hear—I had not seen a thing I should not desire her to imitate—I had not even missed a thing I should be careful for her to acquire—and the company I had met there were such as I should de-

sire her to form connexion with. For what advantages were these children gone abroad? I asked to whom they had committed so important a charge. My friend replied, that it had cost him much anxious care to determine where to send them—he had enquired widely, and chosen the school that seemed, from all he heard, the most desirable. In the *single interview* he had with the lady, he was much satisfied with her conversation, and her account of herself. I asked permission to visit the girls on my return to London, and receive them at my house. It was granted gladly; the father assuring me that to know them under the observation of a friend he could rely on, would be a great satisfaction, while he was too far off to watch them himself.—Why did a parent choose to be so far off?

I returned to town, and repaired with my letters of credit to the school. I was shown into a room, very neat, very clean, very cold—the chairs stood with their backs to the walls—they looked as if they were made to stand there—the sofa looked as if it was made to wear its handsome covering—the bright bars of the grate, filled with cut paper, seemed determined on perpetual summer—the carpet beamed in vernal freshness, as if few were the footsteps privileged to tread it. Over the chimney hung a large bunch of flowers, beautifully painted; but like no flowers that ever grew, unless it might be in Eden. By the side of them hung a crayon head—beautifully executed also, could the head and the hair have

agreed upon the angle of inclination that became them. The lady of the house appeared, and received me with much politeness. She was well dressed, and for any thing I could exactly specify to the contrary, well bred. Yet I know not how it was, the first thing that came to my mind on seeing her, was the refined, elegant, sensible mother I had parted from—it was not from the resemblance, certainly. She had one of those faces which the inexperienced call good-natured; because they are round, fresh, and lively; a physiognomist does not say so. She talked much and sensibly, and very religiously—that sort of way in which people talk, whose right to be called religious has never been questioned by others, nor for a moment doubted by themselves. She passed high encomiums on her pupils, their talents and behaviour; but wished they could forget their parents and their home—it would be better if their mother did not write so often. She then praised their previous education, and wished all her pupils were religiously brought up—some girls came there with such habits and ideas collected at home, it was scarcely possible to prevent their doing mischief to others, or to make them conform, even exteriorly, to the principles on which she educated her pupils: their parents, too, were so suspicious of religion, she was obliged to allow many things she did not approve; and that even for the children's sake, who might else be removed, and placed where they could learn no good at all. This was true—but it reminded me of once

opening a greenhouse window to cool some plants that would not bear the heat, by which I killed all those that had been used to it.

The pupils followed—tall delicate girls of twelve and fifteen years. The governess did not leave them with me. What, I thought, can the father's friend say to the father's child, that needs be listened to? I gave them their mother's letter—they presented it to their governess to read. What, I thought again, can a mother write to her own child, that a stranger presumes to scrutinise? When I talked of their home, I remarked that a tear came to the eye of the elder, while an arch smile played on the face of the younger. The governess remarked it, and commending the latter, gave a gentle reproof to the other. I remembered what that home was, and claimed most fellowship with the feelings of the elder.

The girls came often to my house; and it being perceived that I was confided in by the parents, I was even once or twice allowed to look in upon them at their studies. The governess, in truth, had no cause to fear inspection. Though of a rugged temper, and feelings sufficiently obtuse, she conscientiously fulfilled the duties she had engaged for. She was not the mother of her pupils—she was not pledged to be—but she was their instructress, just, careful, clever. She did not love them—how could she love a dozen fresh-comers every year, whom, at the end of it, she might never see again? But she treated them kindly, and was anxious for their im-

provement. She did not know their characters—how could she, when she never saw them freed from the form her presence imposed? But she managed them upon some broad principle, and instructed them upon some mechanical system, that, no doubt, suited all tempers and capacities. In short, there was nothing to blame: and when I compared the unfurnished rooms, and uncomfortable meals, the harsh orders and captious replies, the slovenly dress and not over-cleanly habits, the restraint before the governess, the rudeness in her absence, the rivalry, bitterness, jealousy, and impertinence, that ever will prevail where twenty persons, young or old, are compelled, without their choice, to dwell together in perpetual competition, without the softening influence of natural affection, early habit, and united interest—when I compared all this with the elegance, the indulgence, the peace, the love, that pervaded the home of these children, doubtless the fault was mine, that I did not immediately perceive the advantages to be derived from such a change.

Talking with the girls in private, expressly for the purpose, I found how differently each one was affected by the change, according to her different character. The elder's heart was all at home. Did she like music, drawing, reading?—She used to like it when she was at home, but she did not now. Did she like her schoolfellows? No—one was ill-natured, another proud, another stupid. Mistrust, suspicion, dislike, feelings she could never in her

home have known, were evidently among the lessons she had learned. She should wish never to know any one when she left school but her papa and mamma. The younger wanted to go home, of course—but she should not like to live always in the country. It would be so moppy to have no companions, and see nothing of the world—Miss P. had asked her to a child's ball, she wished I would ask her mamma to let her go—there could be no harm in going once to see what it was like. Did I think her mamma would let her have a pelisse like Miss B.'s?—the things they had in the country looked so old-fashioned in town! Her governess would not let her go home with Miss F., because they were what she called worldly people; but, for her part, she thought them a great deal more good-natured and pleasant than herself, who was always talking about religion. I was to be sure to tell her mamma that she liked French now, because she had got above a whole class of ill-natured girls who used to laugh at her when she came to school; now she could pay them back again. While the one talked only of her discomforts, her wrongs, her dislikes, in a tone of discontent and ill-humour, I could not but blame extremely, the other talked of her triumphs, her discoveries, and her new-waked desires, in a way that satisfied me she had learned too much. I doubted if either would be as happy when she went back, as she was before she came. Questioning them about the religious instructions and

practices of the school, they said their governess took a great deal of pains about it, read plenty of prayers and plenty of sermons, and gave them very good things to learn. But it took up a great deal of their time, and was very tiresome, and most of the girls made a joke of it. The elder had found out there was no real religion but in her father's house — the younger had found out it was much better to keep one's religion to oneself, and not make a fuss about it. With respect to the manners of my young friends, which they had more especially come hither to improve, the one was indifferent, inattentive, and lounging, almost to rudeness—the other was pert, confident, and fantastical; neither bore the smallest resemblance to the elegant simplicity of their mother.

I have told my story. Are all schools alike? Is a school education the only good or the only bad one? *Must* Christian mothers send their girls away from them? Are children better any where than in the best of homes? Was the personal inspection bestowed on Betty Wilson and Jemmy Butler not due to their own children?

No. XXV.

MATERNAL EDUCATION.

Cornelia, taking upon her the care of her family, and the education of her children, distinguished herself by her modesty, magnanimity, and maternal affection. Her two sons she brought up with such care, that though they were, without dispute, of the noblest family, and had the best natural dispositions of any of the Romans, yet they seemed to owe their eminent virtues more to their education than to their birth.

PLUTARCH.

In returning with some seriousness to the subject of my last paper, I must again offer the apology, no fictitious one, of a particular request. It is an important subject; and though I suppose not that any tale a Listener can tell, or any counsel a writer can offer, will decide the purpose of a mother in the manner of her child's education, they may awaken reflections and feelings in her bosom, that will materially affect her decisions. That all schools are not alike, I will take for granted; there are all the gradations from worst to best that are in other things. Whether a school education is the worst of all possible plans, I will leave to be decided by the wise, when I have related what befell in one of my listening excursions.

I came, no matter how, into a house of strangers. The family were of something higher rank and larger fortune than the one before described. Elegance and fashion, combined, as in modern times they are, with every imaginable comfort and convenience, were the prevailing character of the establishment, and wealth and rank were adorned in it with much that is beautiful; in a worldly point of view, I may say, I saw nothing otherwise. Sir B. was engaged all day in an office of public trust, but not exclusively of the claims of humanity; for he was the first in liberality, and the first in activity, wherever good was to be done. Lady B. was certainly not much at home, and when at home was much engaged in company; yet I saw her very attentive to such domestic duties as became her station, and even more than sometimes belong to it. I heard her household orders given with great exactness and regularity. I accompanied her to the dressmaker's, and the shoemaker's, and various other makers, to provide what was necessary for her family, especially for her children, who seemed to be always first in her thoughts on these occasions. I saw her often employed in preparing comforts for the poor, and entering into minute details of charitable exertion. Altogether, she was a very elegant, refined, and amiable woman. Half her day was passed as above described, the other half in paying or receiving visits — the evening and half the night in company abroad or com-

pany at home, and the remainder, I suppose, in sleep.

I was not ignorant of the existence of children in this house; for, besides the frequent mention of them by the mother, I saw at least a dozen pour into the room after dinner, an hour at which they had better have been in bed, dressed very elegantly, to be flattered, admired, and crammed; but was much concerned to know where they existed during the intervals of this periodical swarming. Lady B. was quite willing to satisfy my curiosity. She had built a nursery and a school-room in a distant part of the house, that the children might not be disturbed by the late hours of the family; she had nurses in one, and governesses in the other, the best that could be procured—that is to say, the dearest that could be purchased. When I asked why she saw so little of her children, she said it was a sacrifice she must necessarily make for their good. When she was at home after breakfast, they were just at their studies—when she would like to take them out with her, they were just at their dinner—and when her evening commenced, they were just going to bed. She seldom went into the school-room, because the governess did not like to be interfered with. She was very anxious they should be morally and religiously educated, and thought it was much better they should see no company, and not be much seen, till they were of age to be introduced. With little difficulty I obtained permission to frequent the nur-

sery and school-room, where the education of the family was performed and perfected, with all the secrecy of the Inquisition. A French nurse, with a strong provincial accent, was kept in the former, that, as soon as the babes could speak, they might talk French, or something as near to it as the dialect of Somersetshire is to English. That the nurse was cramming their infant minds with the idle legends and vulgar superstitions of her catholicism—of its doctrines she knew as little as could be desired—was a matter of no consideration. Here the little creatures enjoyed for seven years the full swing of their native dispositions; except where they happened to interfere with the native dispositions of their nurses, who, next to themselves, agreed to indulge the children—coaxed, humoured, flattered, when they were wrong—reproved, checked, and scolded when they were right—and most carefully instructed to tell no tales out of the nursery of what passed in it. Children early know their interest: the happiness of these depended on their nurses, not on their parents: there was little disposition, had there been an opportunity, to disclose what they heard or saw, at the risk of offending the nurse. What they did see and hear, those mothers who leave their children to the care of servants and the company of servants' companions, but little know. At seven years old, these scions underwent transplantation, and were received to the mysteries of the school-room.

Lady B. had procured her governess as other ladies do—that is, when she wanted one, she drove to her bookseller's, and asked him if he knew of one —he gave her the address of a dozen, whom he did not know—she appointed an interview, and saw them once for half an hour—asked them if they knew every thing, to which they answered "Yes" —if they gave attention to religious and moral instruction, which they did of course—if they belonged to the Church of England, which, for any thing they knew to the contrary, they did also—and, finally, chose the one that asked the highest price, had lived with people of the highest rank, and said "Yes" with the most unshrinking confidence. To this lady, with no further examination than a polite note to her last employer, politely answered in affirmatives to every thing, the children were committed for the next ten years—the most unlimited monarchy existing in society—subject to no laws but those she made for herself, and broke at her pleasure—no superintendence, no resistance, no appeal—legislative, executive, judicative, all in one. The lady who held the appointment during my visit, was not more than five-and-twenty: she had passed her youth in a fashionable boarding-shool, the few first years of her womanhood in the idleness of genteel life, and at twenty had been left unexpectedly to poverty and her own resources. Patronage had put her forward in a task she hated, but could not escape from—five years' experience had taught her how to perform it

with the least possible inconvenience to herself and the greatest possible satisfaction to her careless or ignorant employers—her bosom, seared by her isolated condition, and soured by her fate, gave in to the melancholy narrowness of her sphere—it could only open itself in degrading gossip with the servants about family affairs, or imprudent gossip with the children about that world from which they were so anxiously excluded—its follies, its passions, its excitements, even its vices—all those secrets they were shut up here that they might not too early learn. This, however, was the evening's indulgence or the Sunday's treat—from six in the morning to six at night, the girls were kept to work—lesson after lesson, master after master, filled the six days entire. One hour, and not always that, if the governess happened to have a letter to write at home, these caged birds might breathe the air of heaven —that is, they might lag arm in arm, speechless and all but motionless, round and round the square in London, or the garden in the country. How the lessons were done, nobody knew, and nobody cared —not the governess; she hated the task, and only cared it should be over—not the children, for no valued approbation waited their success—not the mother, for she never interfered. A few things, indeed, it was essential to advance in—their manner, their carriage, might be observed after dinner—they might possibly be desired to play. All this was prepared for—they had ample instructions what to do,

and what to say, whatever should be asked of them. The nursery lesson was relearned in the school-room. It little affected their comfort whether their mother was pleased, but every thing depended on pleasing their governess; from interest and habit, they heard and confirmed the flattering reports made, and the interesting deceptions used, in the few short interviews that took place between the mother and the governess, without any disposition to contradict them. They did not love their governess, for she was selfish and indifferent—they did not fear her, for she had too little dignity and consistency to impose respect—but it was their interest to keep her in good humour; their sole companion, guide, and confidante. Their minds took necessarily the measurement of hers; their opinions her conceits; their principles her duplicity; their knowledge her assumption; their dispositions her plausibility. It might be a little better or a little worse, or a little different without being better or worse, as the governess was changed—but whether worse or better, the careless parent never knew—she paid the salary and was content. This must be allowed a worse education than any decent school would have offered. There, at least, the eye of scrutiny can reach—there, twice at least in the twelve months, tongues are free to tell their tale—there the mind has space to expand itself, and the intellect to measure itself, and passions to punish themselves, in the collision of disunited interest—and there, at least experience

and capability hold the reins of government. I should decide it clearly preferable—as much preferable as the King's Bench to the Bastile.

Putting away all comparison, and the deprecation of any one system of education in particular, which was not my object, I pass on to the question—*Must* parents, Christian parents, put the education of their children out of their own hands? Ought they to do it? Women of the world, women of fashion, I am aware, cannot do otherwise. Their children must get up when *they* go to bed. While they are abroad, or engaged with company at home, which is all the time they are up, somebody must have the management of their children. Their hours, their habits, their duties, if such they are, being the subjects which engross their thoughts and attention, totally disable them from taking any part in their children's education, and the best they can do is carefully to appoint another to their abdicated maternity. And in this case, the object being what it is, perhaps the education ordinarily so attained, is not inadequate to the purpose. They are preparing for the world's service. If in the highest rank of life, an advantageous marriage is avowedly the object—the purchase of their beauty, their name, their dower, or their external accomplishments. A step lower, this may be the object still, but not an avowed one to themselves; and happiness is allowed to stand by the side of wealth and name, in the reckoning of futurity. As you descend in the scale, this object loses its supre-

macy, and the parents educate their children for their actual, rather than their speculative, condition in the world. But still it is for the world, and the world exclusively. Of this same world, the governess may know more than the parent; she may be more apt at modern tactics; she may be fully competent to make her pupils feel ashamed of their father's manners, and their father's friends; and through many a mortification, and many an unchristian feeling, help them to place themselves eventually a step or two above it. In all these alike, to keep their station in the world, or to improve it, is the primary, I may say, the only object; and we leave it willingly to the more able and experienced to decide by what mode of education it may be best attained.

But, with the exception of some few particular cases, and such in every thing there must be, I confess I see not why *Christian* mothers put from their hands the first duty of their existence; and without a necessity, I cannot perceive how it can be excusable. Its incompatibility with other duties is the usual plea. But what are these superseding claims upon a mother's time and care? In the whole round of matronly occupation, I can admit but one—the claims of her husband; and this is often pleaded. So far as these claims really do interfere, I would admit the full priority of this. Were it to our point, I could say much more upon the miscalculation of those ladies who withdraw themselves from the society of their husband, and put his house in perpe-

tual discomfort and confusion, for the sake of what they are pleased to call devotion to their children; but I have generally observed that it is the part of the nursery-maid, not of the governess, these ladies perform in preference to the duties of a wife. So far as they interfere, the latter should surely take precedence; but there are few gentlemen so *des-œuvré* as to require their wife's society always, to be always at home; and if they are principally so, it becomes their duty, and being Christians, as we are throughout supposing, is most likely to become their pleasure, to take an interest in their children's education also. It is not a mother's whole time that needs to be thus occupied—she is mistaken if she supposes it occupies the whole time of those to whom she commits it in her stead. At school, the mistress sees her pupils an hour or two in the day—in the private school-room, the governess is personally indeed imprisoned, but her thoughts, her feelings, and her time, have widely scattered objects. Neither, when a mother takes the direction of her children's education, is it by any means implied that she must have no assistance in the hours that her attention is necessarily withdrawn.

Domestic management is another excuse. I do not particularly pride myself on my powers of calculation, but certainly I never could understand the arithmetic of this sort of economy. The lady has charge of her family, which takes up all her time—that is, she has to order the dinner, provide the

dress, direct the servants, economise the revenue—perhaps she has to make the frocks, and stitch the wristbands, and various other little matters ladies wot of. I might be charged with inexperience were I to affirm that these may be done too; but of this I am certain—a housekeeper may be hired for twenty guineas, and a needle-woman may be hired for ten—and a governess cannot be hired for a hundred, nor a good school be paid for two hundred a-year. With respect to the superior importance of the one charge to the other, need a rational being—least of all need a Christian—be taught it? Is the cutting of a frock or the shape of a bonnet of more importance than the formation of a child's mind and character, as some mothers practically declare it to be, by neglecting the one, because they have to attend to the other? Christian ladies of the present day have discovered that neither their household cares, nor the claims of their husbands, nor the demands of society, nor all united, are sufficient to occupy their whole time. Witness the schools of charity, the institutions of benevolence, the committee-rooms of societies. Have we no married women here? And, if we have, where are their children? Fifty miles off, taking their chance in a fashionable school—at home, left to the entire management of a stranger, uninterested and incompetent to the formation of their character, whatever she may be to their mere tuition. Far be it from me to express disapprobation of the above exertions

—but I must think the moral, and religious, and rational education of our own children, a prior duty. If it can be done for hire, hire somebody to go to the school of charity—if orders will supply the place of personal interference, send a deputy to the cottage of poverty. We know they cannot—and we act on the persuasion in every thing but in the first great duty of maternal responsibility.

The last remaining excuse we hear women plead, is incapacity. There may be cases—but excepting that of sickness, we confess we know not where to look for them—in which a Christian mother is incapable of educating her own children, with such assistance as she might procure, without giving the management out of her own hands. What should she desire for her children that she has not? A few accomplishments? They may be easily purchased, if she can afford it—if not, they may be done without. A little more of solid, useful knowledge? *That* she may acquire, if it is necessary, or put them in a way to acquire it for themselves; or that also she may pay somebody else to teach them. She does not understand teaching, and knows not so well to manage children as those whose particular business it is? This she might know. And to what sort of persons does she defer her fancied inexperience? To the young women, for the most part, less educated than herself, as little used, and far more unwilling, to the task! who come to it to earn an uncomfortable subsistence, with little inter-

est in it while doing, and little gain from it when done—strangers to the children, their dispositions, and their prospects—neglecting, mistaking, often opposing the parents' views and aims; or, if yielding to them, embarrassed by their inconsistency with her own. And this is equally true whether the child be educated at home or abroad. Mothers complain that governesses are so little interested in their charge, enter so little into the parents' feelings, perform so like hirelings their task. Are not these complaints unreasonable? What is the wonder that a stranger should little like the charge a mother shows no liking for?—should do distastefully what a mother shuns entirely? What should she be made of, that her heart and soul should be devoted to children whom she must part from, and probably never see again, or see them in a sphere she cannot approach—while she whose first and deepest interest it is, now and for ever, prefers to occupy herself with any thing besides? It is vain to say the governess is brought up to it—it is her business: the former for the most part is not true, the latter is her misfortune. She may be a very useful assistant to the mother, but she never, a few peculiar cases excepted, can assume her duties, or affect her cares: though she may, and often does, most conscientiously fulfil her own—that is, she does what she engaged to do; the best a stranger can do for a stranger's children.

I fear there is more behind than all these pleas.

There must be something more than this that would induce the pious mother, whose heart beats in holy solicitude over the spiritual welfare of every peasant's child, to send from her own hands, from her own care, the child of her affections—to make over to another the fond claims of gratitude and affection due to the instructors of our childhood—to forego the sweetest, fondest task maternity can know; rearing, forming, maturing its own work, and watching the growth, and gathering in holy gratitude the produce of its labours. We fear that parents have not made up their minds for which world their children are to be reared, and are determined they shall be made fit for either. Should Mammon hereafter claim them, their breeding shall not disgrace his service—whereas, should the parents' God be pleased hereafter to claim the child, his grace will supply what is wanting, and subdue what is amiss. O, shame upon the monstrous calculation, founded on the proud exactions of the one master and the forbearing pity of the other! It has been remarked that the children of religious parents turn out worse than others. If they do, this is the cause. The worldly parent is honest in his purpose, and succeeds in it. The Christian parent is not honest; he will run any risks, make any compromise, rather than forego for his children one of the factitious advantages enjoyed by the children of the world. He says—his conduct says—it is as much an object of desire to him that his children should rise in the world, shine in so-

ciety, distinguish themselves in earthly pursuits, and form high connexions, as it is to others. If it is, our religion is as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal—and the sooner we give over to fret the ears of men with it, the better. If the advantages of earth bear exactly the same relative importance that they did before, we may have changed our creed, but our hearts are the same—we had better shake hands again with the world, and ask pardon for the divisions we have occasioned. We have talked of higher destinies and superior aims; and for ourselves we seem, from satiety and weariness it may be, to have altered the objects of pursuit and the estimate of good; but begin the game again for our children; and, behold, it is no other than it was before. They must play for the same stake, and use the same means to win it, and set as high a value on it, and be taught to play for it at as high a cost, as if we did not profess to have discovered that it is not worth the having. And for its sake we must submit to place in jeopardy that rich inheritance which it is not ours indeed to secure to them—nor the other either—but it is ours to use the means for one or for the other, according as our wishes are; and as our wishes are, our endeavours most surely will be, however we may persuade ourselves eternity has our choice, while time has our cares. What portion the Disposer of all things will bestow, his wisdom and mercy must determine. His promises to parental care are great and many. They scarcely

seem to have been fulfilled. Have those parental cares been honest ones? Has not the father, the mother, for the sake of some fancied external advantage, exposed her children to contamination? For a name of fashion, has she not compromised her own principles? For fear the world should reject them, has she not provoked their rejection from above?

I would be the last to neglect or undervalue any reasonable attention to external charms in education, still less any rational cultivation of the mind. We know that the world that now is, as well as that which is to come, is the Christian's inheritance—beauty, elegance, accomplishments, are the gifts of God, and therefore to be valued. But to all its season, and to all its place; and we must believe that the road to fashion and distinction in the world, is not the road to Christian simplicity and truth; nor the same education promotative of both. Parents intend to secure to their children a double advantage; but ill, for the most part, fares the undertaking. The children of fashion disown them, because they will not go all lengths in their career—the religious mistrust them, because they wear another's livery. They are not happy with the world, because they have the truths and feelings of religion in their hearts—they are not happy out of it, because it is there they are to exhibit and succeed. Brought up entirely for the world, they had been happy in it while it lasted, for their minds had been suited to their pursuits. Brought up entirely for religion, they had

been happy out of it, for they had never known what its attractions are. But now the thorns are scattered on either path—of desire on the one side, of compunction on the other. And if the better part of their education eventually prevail, the other part may rivet a chain about their necks, that will make them go heavily, even to the gates of heaven.

No. XXVI.

GOOD HUMOUR.

For birds are like men in their contests together,
And in questions of right can dispute for a feather.
Peacock at Home.

And trust me, dear, good humour can prevail,
When cries and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Pope.

It was one of those splendid days before midsummer, when every thing seems to have reached the perfection of beauty, and to luxuriate in the fulness of enjoyment. The leaf had blown full, but it had not faded, neither had the dust or the drought spoiled its brightness. Of the field, the hedge, the woodland, every flower had blown; but as yet they had not died—there seemed scarcely space enough in nature for the revel of their beauty. All creation teemed with increase of life, without the feeling that sometimes assimilates it with increase of suffering —a feeling of life's disproportionate supply. The character of this hour was abundance—prodigal abundance. The seed was in the grass, the berry was in the blossom, the wheat was in the blade; and the barrenness of winter was forgotten. It was evening,

but there was no cold to shrink the limbs, no dews to chill the blood. Beneath the thick foliage of the underwood, over grass and flowers, where the mower had never whet his scythe, I walked as dry as if on the artificial carpet of the drawing-room. We have not in England many such days: in the few we have, there is a concentration of delight—of luxurious ecstasy,— in our sensations, that if we had them always, we could scarcely feel. But this makes not to my tale.

I was walking in such a place, at such a moment, when I observed a group of young people, busy, with no common earnestness, in making a bouquet of flowers from the wood. And much was the difficulty, and many were the dangers, they seemed disposed to encounter, to effect their purpose. If a Honeysuckle, of fairer promise than those below, hung high upon the branches, long and patient were the contrivances to reach it, and great the destruction of muslin and riband that ensued. If a Rosebud of deeper red than usual was caught sight of, many were the scratches endured to ravish the guarded treasure from its bed of thorns. And presently they were on their knees in the herbage, in spite of sting-nettles and thistles, to steal some more hidden treasure—it might be the sweet Violet, or the pretty Myosotis. From the eagerness with which these beauties were collected, and the taste with which they were chosen, I supposed the bouquet was forming for some favourite purpose.

Casting my eyes at that moment on the ground, I saw under my feet a bed of small white flowers. They too had looked down upon it, and several times their feet had trodden over it—but they had not stooped to gather any. I picked a piece—the tiny stars that formed each separate flower, of the purest and most brilliant white, arranging themselves into a head, formed a group as rich as it was delicate. The thread-like stems that supported them, the circles round it of slender leaves, minutely cut and fringed, gave such elegance and lightness to the whole, it seemed fitted to be the flower of fairyland. But a still greater charm was the exquisite perfume of the many blossoms—too delicate, like its beauty, to be perceived at a distance, but exquisite when approached. Perhaps, because I was enamoured of its charms, perhaps, because others had neglected, and despised it, I left the rose among its thorns, and the woodbine on its heights, and gathered myself a bouquet of this small flower, contemplating its beauty, and feasting on its perfume, during the remainder of my walk. My flowers died—the pure white took the hue of decay, and the perfume of the blossoms passed. With still lingering attachment, I placed the withered branches in my work-box; as they dried there, they acquired the most delightful and refreshing scent, and became themselves a treasure—one carefully collected, I have been told, by ladies in other countries, to perfume their drawers—and for weeks and months that it remained there, I found no diminution of its sweetness,

Many a time since, as I have walked the paths of society, circumstances have called back to memory my sweet Woodroffe—fenced with no thorns, armed with no stings, planted on no heights inaccessible—attainable without cost, and yet passed by, its beauty and its sweetness unperceived. And there is one thing in particular to which I have compared it. It is so despised a thing, that I scarcely know by what name I should call it, or if there is a name by which what I mean will be exactly understood. I would call it good nature, but, in the received language of society, a good-natured person means a fool—or, at best, a character that having no prominence of feature, good or bad, that can be seized upon, is dismissed with a sentence of harmless uselessness, under the appellation of good nature. Good temper is not the thing I mean. I have seen most decidedly good tempers with a great deficiency of this quality—and I have seen it subsist where the temper, when put to trial, has proved by no means a good one. I have seen so much virtue, so much excellence, so much benevolence, subsist without it, and I have seen it pre-eminently exhibited among so much vice, that I am satisfied it is a virtue and a beauty of itself, independently of every other; and one too much neglected, and too much despised. For want of a better name, I will call it Good humour. In the commonest acceptation of words, when we say a person is good-humoured, I do not think it expresses what I mean—but when we say any one is in *good*

humour, I think it does exactly. So let it be understood that by good humoured, I mean always in a good humour.

This plant, alas! is not, like my sweet Woodroffe, indigenous in England. Whether by something in our physical formation, or by the influence of our skies, I fear it is an exotic with us, and must be cultivated with some diligence ere it will flourish. But that it will grow in England, I am sure—and that, in every bosom swayed by Christian principles, it ought to be implanted, if it is not indigenous, I am doubly sure. I have known too little of foreign society to give it as my own observation; but from all that may be learned otherwise than by personal intercourse, I do not understand that there is any other country where people get out of humour gratuitously, and for nothing, as we do in England—and I am sure, if that is the case, it is no small inducement to seek the influence of fairer skies; for what with our own ill-humour, and other people's ill-humour, half the pleasure of existence is destroyed—and what is worse, virtue, and piety, and truth, lose half their charm—man is injured, and God is offended.

I go into a family where there is nothing external to interrupt the happiness of its members, and nothing wanting that can essentially promote it: and I find every body as intent on making troubles, as if it were their misery to have none. At breakfast, peace is disturbed, and the blessing of abundance

forgotten, because an egg is not boiled enough—though a few minutes and hot water would soon boil it more. After breakfast a walk or a ride is rendered thoroughly disagreeable, and the delights of scenery and sunshine disregarded, because no one will say whether they prefer to go up hill or down; though it is evident all will be dissatisfied who have not their choice. At noon, every body begins to grunt and grumble, because the day is so hot; which might be excused, if it would cool them. At dinner, the gentleman is out of humour, because the window is open—whereas nothing can be so easy as to get up and shut it; the lady is out of humour, because the butcher has served beef, instead of mutton—though no one at table cares whether they eat mutton or beef; the daughter is out of humour, because she is sitting on the wrong side of the table—though she had no reason on earth for preferring the other side but because she is not sitting there; the boys are out of humour, because a shower prevents their going out—though, till it began, they had not discovered that they wished to go out; the servant is out of humour, because the bell has rung a second time before he has time to answer it the first; the dog—the least unreasonable, as I think, of the party—is out of humour, because he has been kicked, and trodden upon, and scolded for being in the way, when he might as well be put quietly out of the way. The evening, in a family party of well-informed, accomplished, and agreeable people, did they happen to be

in a good humour, could not pass otherwise than pleasantly. But here every thing goes wrong. Mary is vexed because Sarah opens the instrument first. Sarah will not play, because Mary is vexed; and Mary will not play for about the same reason—and so neither plays. Jane cannot do her work, because Anne has lost her needle, though five hundred other needles were offered to her choice, neither can she quietly leave her work undone. When one takes up a book, another pronounces it rude, disagreeable, and unsociable, to read in company—though a full half-hour has passed since any one opened their lips. If one laughs, the other is sure to wonder what there is to laugh at—if one complains, the other is certain there can be nothing the matter. Whatever is praised, nobody else can see the merit of—though if it had first been censured, some one would have found it all perfection. It may be supposed this family are remarkably ill-natured. So far from it, there is not among them one who does not love the other most sincerely, or would hurt a hair of the other's head, to serve a selfish interest.

I go into another family, where the hand of adversity presses hard—where unaccustomed penury has abridged the indulgences, and overhanging evil saddened the bosoms of its inmates. I see the father come home after a day of anxious exertion for his family: and instead of being greeted with cheerfulness and smiles, to lighten his bosom of its cares, or at least to requite him for their endurance, he finds

nothing but superfluous ill humour, and useless contradictions, and teasing importunities. Why this, why that, why not the other? If he wants any thing, it is the only thing that cannot be had—if he complains of any thing, it is the very thing that must be —he cannot put so much as his hat or his stick down, but it is in the wrong place. His wearied mind is regaled with nothing but complaints of servants, complaints of children, complaints of every thing. If he tries to cheer the spirits with some pleasant communication, his own are damped by the humour with which it is received. If anxiety has made him irritable, instead of being soothed and pacified by compliance and forbearance, he is goaded afresh with idle bickerings and useless opposition—and this from a wife, from children, who in the genuine affection of their hearts, would gladly, were it possible, take the load from his bosom, and bear it all themselves.

I see the mistress of a house, a very pattern of domestic virtue, the most just, humane, well-meaning person in the universe, whose whole care in life is to do her own duty, and see that others do theirs —by a regular seasoning of ill-humour, I see her succeed in making every body's business irksome and disagreeable. If any one comes near, they are always in the way—if they keep at a distance, they are always out of the way—if they do any thing without bidding, they are too busy by half—if they wait to be bidden, they never think for themselves. If you offer her advice, she likes people to mind their own business—

if nobody interferes with her, she has every thing to bear alone. The very thing she lets you see she desires of you, she refuses when you offer it: and the very thing she has done to please you, she undoes as soon as she sees you are pleased with it. If you do a kindness to any one about her, she will defeat it, or empoison it; though she would have done it herself, if you had not. Yet—for I know her well —she is not a selfish or an unfeeling woman in matters of importance—she would sacrifice her own advantage for the benefit of the meanest of her family.

I see the generous benefactor, who divides her income with the unfortunate, who looks out for sorrow that she may lessen it, and for need that she may supply it: at great expense, and, perhaps, the sacrifice of many of her superfluities, she has brought the afflicted into her house or under her protection; and day by day I see her empoison the cup she fills for them, and make bitter the bread she supplies to them, by little ill-humoured suspicions, and captious answers, and sideway remarks, and broad hints, and bywords, not one of which has the shadow of a meaning or a cause; and by perpetual wearing on a wounded spirit, the more susceptible in proportion as it is grateful, consumes the heart with useless irritation, that she might as well have left to break with the weight of its own sorrow.

I see people compelled to live together, and who would not, by the offer of a kingdom, be induced to live apart, managing matters as if the disturbing of

each other's peace was the only object of their union; contending for a thousand little things that neither cares about, though, in really important matters, either has pleasure in yielding to the other. I hear many a daughter quarrel with her mother, and many a wife dispute with her husband, whether they shall go out of one door or the other, when, if she were called upon to give up house, doors and all, for her mother's or her husband's sake, she would do it without a word. And I see again, where, from necessity or choice, every thing is yielded to the will of another, so much ill grace in the doing, so many bitter words and sullen looks, that more pain and provocation is given by compliance, than would be by resistance.

I know families of young people, upon whom thousands have been expended to make them agreeable, and who have taken as much pains to commend themselves to the approbation of society, and the affection of each other, as their parents have taken for them: and they are the most agreeable, entertaining, affectionate young people in the universe, *when* they happen to be in a good humour. But as to any possible calculation when that may be, you might as well trust Moore's Almanac for a fine day. Never have I been able to discover, by the affinities of cause and consequence, or any other affinities, by what laws these ladies, or any other ladies, get in and out of humour. You must take your chance with them, and that but a poor one: it is a summer-day,

indeed, in which you do not find some one out of humour, with something or with nothing, with each other or themselves. Then, if you are on intimacy, wo betide you!—for whatever you say is the wrong thing—whatever you propose is the disagreeable thing—whatever you ask is the impossible thing. If you are sufficiently a stranger to impose deference towards yourself, wo betide you still!—for all your amusement is to hear sisters—sisters most really attached to each other—snapping and snarling, contending and contradicting like nothing but the little growling dogs that settle all their quarrels on the pavement, to the no small annoyance of the passengers. I never join a family circle, but somebody's humour disturbs the rest. I never join a party of pleasure, but somebody's humour makes it disagreeable. These are small matters; but it is the perpetual dropping that wears out the stone, and not the sudden shower—and it is these small frettings of ill-humour that consume the peace of our bosoms, and attaint the character of domestic happiness in England, which else has there, and perhaps there only, its full and perfect loveliness. That this propensity to ill humour is the effect of a foggy atmosphere and a sluggish circulation, I have no doubt. But we do not abide an evil contentedly, merely because we know the cause; rather we go more hopefully to find a cure. Whether we can help feeling out of humour, I will not be positive; though, by the habit of reflection and resistance, I think we may.

That we can avoid making others feel it, I am quite positive. I know one, who, from the languor of a consumptive habit, feels always ill and dispirited in the morning; when asked why she never speaks at breakfast-time, she says it is, lest, under those sensations, she may speak ill-naturedly. I know one, who, from mental exertion at night, feels for the few first hours of the day, all the languor and exhaustion of disease. Having the care of children, she never reproves them or gives them orders till the sensation goes off, because she feels that she must wait to be in a good humour herself, before she can judge of any thing, much less venture a reproach. This case is more clearly physical than most—and yet it can thus be governed. I often hear ladies say in their families, "Do not tease me to-day, for I am unwell." I should not have the least objection to hear them say, "Do not tease me to-day, for I am in an ill humour"—the candour of the confession on one part, and the shame of it on the other, might put an end to ill humour in both. That all can control their humours is certain; because all do when there is a necessity for it. In certain companies, in the presence of those we fear, or with whom we have some purpose to effect, either the ill humour is conquered, or it is concealed. However the venom be native in our bosoms, the sting is put forth only at our pleasure—and strange as it is, we reserve it for our best and dearest—for the torment of our home, and the misery of our families.

You, who in character are yet unnamed, who are fretting and toiling yourselves to be hereafter called clever women, sensible women, elegant or accomplished, or benevolent women, has it ever come into your mind to earn the title of good-humoured women? Perhaps not, for you use the appellation in contempt; and yield it to those who can claim no character besides. You have heard it thus used, and you have not reflected on the term, or on the thing it means. Of this be persuaded—Good humour will lighten sorrows that talent can but render more acute. Good humour will bear you through difficulties that the strongest sense cannot help you to evade. Good humour will preserve affections, beauty and elegance can do little more than win. Good humour will lessen the sufferings of humanity more than thousands of gold and silver, which only administer to the body, while the other spares the mind. Good humour will remain a blessing when others are gone by—like the Woodroffe that was sweet in my drawer, when the rose had perished, and the woodbine was forgotten.

No. XXVII.

GOOD TEMPER AND GOOD HUMOUR.

Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
Good humour only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains its past.

POPE.

I AM acquainted, very intimately acquainted, with two ladies: they are cousins. I shall call them Susan and Amelia. They were so much alike, that people thought them sisters. They were brought up together, and with the same prospects in life. Now, it might have happened that Good temper, that is, Amelia, had been also good humoured—and that Good humour, that is Susan, had been good tempered—and there would have been an end of my story. But the case is otherwise. Susan was not good tempered and Amelia was not good humoured, as I am prepared to prove.

When I first knew them, they were in the nursery. I often questioned the nurse respecting their dispositions; to which her answer was, "Why, ma'am, my mistress thinks—and to be sure she must know best

—that Miss Amelia has the best heart at the bottom—but we all like Miss Susan best. She is very naughty, to be sure, now and then—but is not so tiresome as Miss Amelia." My own observation sufficiently illustrated her meaning. So long as things went on in their usual way, Susan was the most pleasant child in the world. If Amelia ran to the rocking-horse before her when she was going to ride, which she always did, if she perceived the intention, she began rocking her with all her might, laughing as if that had been her first design. When something was to be divided, though the nurse owned the eldest should have the first choice, Susan would say, "Never mind, Amelia shall have which she likes"—and the air of delight with which she took what was left, proved that she really did not mind. Like most good humoured people, her compliance was pretty largely drawn upon. It was Susan do this, and Susan go there—let your cousin have that, and help your cousin to do this. But all was good to Susan: she frisked about like a butterfly, that driven from one flower settles upon another, and loses nothing of its gaiety. All strangers liked her; for she answered cheerfully to every question put to her, smiled at every thing that was said to please her; when noticed, was playful and communicative; when left alone, amused herself, and troubled nobody.

But in vain to poor Amelia things went in the usual way—the right way for her they could not go. *When* in a good humour, she was a most generous

child, and would do any thing to oblige another; but this did not happen once a-week. "I don't like this, I don't like that—I wish you would do this—I wish you would not do that"—changing the choice more rapidly than it was possible to comply with it; and when it was complied with, not a bit the better pleased—this was the music through all the days besides. It is proverbially said of a person we need not name, that he is in a good humour when he is pleased; but this was not the case with Amelia—she was often pleased, delighted in her little heart, at having carried her point. But she took care nobody should see it, and sat pouting on, as if she had still been under contradiction. With strangers she was extremely disagreeable; if jested with, sulked, and turned away—seldom answered a question, but made a point of asking them when she saw it was inconvenient to attend to her. The child, I thought, was detestable; and certainly never happy.

But there came a day—I mention one—but there were many such—when outrageous noises drew me to the nursery. Susan had, in mischievous playfulness, thrown a favourite picture of Amelia's into the fire. Amelia, with her usual whine, but not meaning really to hurt her cousin—she never had been known to hurt a worm—had pushed her over a stool, and caused her a severe fall. I found Susan in an outrageous passion, screaming and stamping; while Amelia, overwhelmed with grief for what she had done, was using every possible means to comfort and

appease her. Though not in fact the aggressor, since she had no more intention of injuring her cousin, than her cousin of vexing her, she had forgotten all wrong—was begging her pardon a thousand and a thousand times, offering her dolls, books, every thing she possessed, to make it up, and never even told me the provocation she had received—every thought of herself was lost in the idea that her cousin was hurt. Susan was in fact not hurt; but she chose to scream on, and she refused all compromise and compensation. No power of persuasion or command could force her to kiss her cousin, then or throughout the day; though poor Amelia did nothing but court and solicit her to peace. When I alluded to the picture, which I knew she felt the loss of, she answered sweetly, "If I had burned Susan's picture, she would have laughed: and I ought to have laughed, for she only did it in fun; and not to have pushed her down." Susan recovered her careless good-humour to every body else, but would not kiss or play with her cousin—and two days afterwards, seeing her in the right position for her purpose, pushed her down over the same stool.

When I knew these girls again, they were just growing into women, and beginning to take their places in society. How they had been educated, or what means had been tried to correct their faults, I know not; but they were not corrected. The first time I met them was at a party, given by a lady something their inferior, and courting their acquaint-

ance. As it often happens in such cases, this party was not quite so agreeable as it had been meant to be. Some whose coming had been boasted about had not thought proper to appear—those who had come were some way or other not themselves, alias, *out of humour*—and, as party-giving ladies well know, all things at such times go perversely. Music was tried; and my young friends, I perceived, were looked to as leading performers. The piano proved to be out of tune. Amelia rose from it in the middle of a duet, jingled the false note to make the calamity more evident, and bring to its height the mortification and confusion of the lady; said it was impossible to play on such a thing, and sullenly resumed her seat at a distance. Susan played on with hearty good humour—made an amusement of the occasional discord—and if there came less music, there came more mirth, than if the string had not broken. As notes of excuse kept arriving instead of company, Amelia grew more and more humorsome. She would do nothing she was asked—would know nothing about any thing that was spoken of—yawned on purpose, and then apologised for being so rude—complained of the air of small rooms, and the stupidity of large parties—in short, took every means to expose the awkwardness and increase the embarrassment of the family. Susan was never happier in her life—saw nothing amiss, except to make it a source of amusement—set every body at ease by being so; and made every body happy by

appearing so; exerting her powers in proportion to the want of them in others, she entertained the whole party. Let not my correspondent say she was coquetting, or showing off. She was amongst her inferiors, whom she had not the smallest desire to attract - but she was in a good humour, and wished to make every one else so: there was no affectation in it; for if not pleased with the party, she was pleased with the intention to please her. I saw them afterwards in a different class of company. Amelia, who now could not condescend to please because *nobody* was there, was then dogged because she herself was *nobody*. She could neither laugh at a good story, nor give credit to a true one, nor show interest in the most interesting exhibitions of talent, wisdom, or virtue—the large room was as much too cold, as the small one had been too warm; but as nobody here cared whether Amelia was pleased or not, she had all the fruits of her ill humour to her own share. Susan was just as happy as before, though acting a different part—she listened with as much zest as she before had talked, entered into every thing with evident delight, and evinced just as much willingness to receive pleasure, as she had before done to afford it.

It may be thought Amelia's conduct arose from pride. I had proof of the contrary. With them at home, a few days after, a dispute arose. The lady of the first party had asked them to introduce her to the lady of the second party; partly to gratify

her vanity, partly to serve some essential interests. Amelia wished to consent—why not serve another when they could? Susan was positive against it; she was ashamed to acknowledge the acquaintance. Amelia thought this a selfish reason for refusing those who had been kind to them, particularly when they would be served as well as gratified. Susan did not wish to serve them—why should she put herself out of the way to serve people she did not care for? Indeed she did not like them—they behaved very ill about an affair last year, and she was glad of an opportunity of showing them she resented it. Amelia could not bear to give them the pain of a refusal—she would go to Lady B. herself, and tell her the wishes of the D.'s, and what very good sort of people they were. Susan protested she should not, or she would tell fifty things about them to Lady B., and thereupon put herself into a most formidable passion, made up of reproaches to her cousin, and vengeance on the D.'s for their presumption.

At home, the same game went on perpetually. Amelia was the very torment of the house, by her perpetual peevishness. There was not one of her acquaintance liked her; for if she liked them, she would not show it. Yet if one, any one, was in want of any thing—in distress about any thing—nothing to Amelia was too much trouble, or too much sacrifice. Though she would not put down her book to amuse her best friend when present, she never was heard to utter a harsh word against her bitterest enemy

when absent. Susan, on the contrary, was the very charm, and spirit, and comfort of the family. Whatever was wrong, her good humour put it right. Every body else might be attended to first, Susan was never impatient. Praise her, she would kiss you with delight—reprove her, she would not recriminate a word—the whims and fancies of those about her were only opportunities for showing her conciliating and self-forgetting disposition: she seemed to perceive them, only to accommodate to them as much as possible surrounding circumstances. But Susan was resentful when wronged, and implacable when offended, and selfish when any material interest was in question.

I saw these girls become wives and mothers—living in domestic prosperity under the influence of religious principle; and eventually falling into sudden adversity. Susan now knew that she was resentful, implacable, and self-interested; and she knew that these passions were deeply sinful. She knew that the favour her good humour won her from the world, was a poor equivalent for the approbation of Him who in secret beheld the obliquity of her character. Bitter indeed was her secret anguish, when she felt those tempers rising in her bosom. Ceaseless were the prayers that went up to Heaven for power to subdue them; and not less severe the struggles outwardly to restrain them. When they broke forth into action, she made, as soon as she recovered herself, every possible reparation. Mean-time her house

was the happiest of houses; religion seemed to be the parent of the loveliness it assumed, and nowhere was it so beloved and so admired. Servants served willingly a mistress who was sure to be pleased with their services, and patient of their faults. The husband adored a woman who, come home in what humour he would, was always in a humour to accommodate herself to his. The children—(there is nothing on earth so catching as good humour)—every body in the house—was happy: and though now and then mamma did still go into a passion, and exhibit violent symptoms of a proud self-will, husband and children were content to wait recovery, as the privileged possessor of cloudless skies abides the summer storm, sure to be followed by months of unbroken sunshine. And when the time of adversity arrived, while the evil spirit sunk before the humbling stroke, the gay good humour shone with treble lustre. With the same cheerfulness with which she once commanded a retinue of servants, she now did their work. If the husband missed the luxuries of his table, he never missed the smile with which he was welcomed to it. If want and disease preyed upon her frame, no one heard of it—mamma had time for every thing, strength for every thing, spirits for every thing. The vulgarity and narrow-mindedness of those among whom she was now cast, never seemed to annoy Susan, or disgust her; and therefore her superiority never gave offence to them, though it secretly governed and guided them to good.

Contrite, and ashamed of her faults, Susan claimed no merit for her good humour—nor indeed was it any, for it was the gift of nature; but it was beautiful; it repaired every thing to her family; it was adored by all, and the name of God had honour by her means.

Amelia had a kind husband and good children, but they could not please her—she had servants, but they would not stay with her—abundance, but she would not enjoy it—religion, but she made it unamiable. Her husband had bad health—she nursed him with devoted and anxious fondness, when he was ill; and teased him ill again with petty annoyances, as soon as he began to recover. If she was indisposed, nobody else might enjoy their health. The children could not get through their lessons because mamma was out of humour—the servants neglected their work because mistress was cross—the friends would not accept the husband's invitations for fear madam should be in an ill humour. The poor were loaded with her bounties, and worn out of their lives with her ill-humoured interference. Providence, I hope, had thanks in secret for her abundant blessings; but there was only fretting and grumbling before men. Amelia was religious—she would have sacrificed her dearest interest for religion; I believe she would have gone to the stake for it. But it never came to Amelia's mind that trifling ill humours were sins. She knew she loved her fellow-creatures, and spent her life in serving them; she loved God, and

would forego any desire rather than break his laws deliberately; and she laboured incessantly to instruct and influence others to his service. Whether that she found no direct law against ill humour; or whether that, by long-indulged habit, she had become insensible to her own fretfulness, I know not—but I have little reason to think that she prayed earnestly against it, since I never saw the effect of prayer in adequate improvement. And when poverty came, trebly embittered was the draught she mixed of it, by her querulous and fretful humour. Her husband, feeling himself the cause, though blameless, of her troubles, was wounded and heart-rent with every fresh betrayal of her selfish sensibility. Her children, the objects of her peevish anxieties and fretful cares, were discouraged, by finding themselves a source of uneasiness instead of comfort. Those among whom she was cast, falsely attributed to pride and contempt her unconciliating manners. As ungraciously as she once conferred favours, she now received them, and was thought ungrateful, as she before was thought unfeeling—though, in fact, she was neither. Amelia talked of the comforts of religion, expressed herself acquiescent in the will of Heaven, which I really believe she felt, but no one believed her, from the tone of whining discontent with which she spoke, and the impatience of every little contradiction or incommodity that intervened while she was speaking. Why does not religion make her happy?—Why does not religion make her

amiable? were the questions asked by those who knew not. Those who knew, were aware that religion, beautiful ever in itself, was disguised by the peevishness of long-indulged, and now, perhaps, unvanquishable ill humour. Humanity cannot say that Amelia ever injured intentionally any human being—piety cannot say Amelia disgraced her profession of it, by any act of deliberate selfishness, injustice, or inhumanity. Yet few persons, in the sum total, ever gave more pain, or spoiled more enjoyment, than poor Amelia.

My tale is told. If it be thought Good temper is the better character, I have no objection: one fault is not the less a fault for the discovery of a worse. My object was to illustrate the difference; not to palliate either.

No. XXVIII.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

Each night, ere needful slumber seals thy eyes,
Home to thy soul let these reflections rise—
How has, this day, my duty been express'd?
What have I done, omitted, or transgress'd?
Golden Verses of PYTHAGORAS

I HAD been listening for some time without learning any thing it might be useful to relate—I began to doubt whether, in this great city, there is not too much noise for my profession. In the silence of solitude I had heard the voice of truth—in the lowly hovel I had gathered the words of piety. Is nothing to be heard in London, crowded, active, bustling London? Where every thing is said, done, felt, thought, it seems impossible that nothing is to be heard, except that it may be difficult to hear it. The music of the battle field drowns the sighs the silent chamber would reveal. The busy playing of the waters conceals the rocks their stillness would betray. One advantage, at least, I determined to make of this busy season—for I remembered how many an hour I had known my young friends in the country lounge away in weariness, for want, as they told me,

of something to do, particularly if it happened to rain. Could I not see who was well employed in London, and send them the welcome news? I visited, with this view, many of my young friends in London, and found them all desperately, desperately busy. This was a real gratification to me, when to it I can add, that I found not one who was not well employed. There was great variety in their occupations, it is true—it came into my mind to wonder that a book had not ere this been written on the various kinds of bustles, with all their properties, useful, deleterious, medicinal, &c. There would be the fashionable bustle, the literary bustle, the religious bustle. They would not be all classed together —for while the one was ranked with the baleful Atropus, whose venom pervades the plant throughout, the other might be classed with the fragrant Hawthorn, whose spines, while they demand some caution in the handling, are but an additional beauty to the plant.

Among the many occupations of my young acquaintance, some were in the last year of education —a sort of London finishing. There was the Italian master, the German master, the drawing-master, the singing-master, the position-master; treading each so quickly on the other's heels, that, as every girl knows who has felt it her duty to make the most of such brief and expensive advantages, there was not, between reacting the last lesson and preparing for the next, a moment's respite, from six o'clock in the

morning till ten at night. Some, whose apprenticeship to learning had expired, I found commencing business on their own account. To read as many books as possible—to talk about them as much as possible—to attend as many lectures as possible—to see as many pictures, hear as much music, write as many extracts, and fill as many albums as possible, was to these the not less arduous, though voluntary service.

I have said no one was ill employed—must I recall my words, to speak of those to whom, in this first year of their appearance, the late mornings scarce sufficed to hurry from the dressmaker's to the jeweller's and the jeweller's to the laceman's; and the evenings scarce sufficed to dress them for the night? Or shall we leave it to be supposed I visited none such? I think, if there is a creature more lovely, more interesting, more engaging than every other, it is a young Englishwoman of a certain rank, at the moment of her entrance into life. What shall we say of the hurry of dissipation, that makes of her that heartless, useless, vapid, *flétrie* thing, a woman of fashion? Apart from all these, I found some to be equally busy with what may be considered the rational enjoyment of society, united with domestic duties in which they had newly begun to take a part, and many economical devices to preserve caste, keep up an appearance, and maintain the customary style of living.

But let not country girls believe that London girls

are all employed about themselves. There are those who may be called charitably busy. These productive labourers make so many pincushions, card-racks, muffettees, and match-holders, that, to an inexperienced eye, it might seem the produce of a day would exceed the consumption of a twelvemonth—but it does not prove so—and though I have heard it objected that these things are useless, it scarcely can be proved that the labour is wasted, while poverty and destitution enjoy the accumulated capital.

Again, some of the young ladies I found entering on a sort of occupation peculiar to the times—to do good or to receive good, was their object—these, perhaps, might be more particularly termed religiously busy. And while I have distinguished these various occupations, as characterising different classes, I do not know that any one implied a neglect of the others, as far as differing circumstances made them differently necessary. I was reflecting on the probable result of this activity of employment, that seemed to characterise a London season, when, bearing a London post-mark, and seemingly written there, I received the following paper. What then? In all this bustle, somebody has time to think—to enter into their hearts, and examine, hour by hour, what passes there—to weigh their motives, scrutinise their feelings, trace out the wary deceptions of self-love, and render an account of each day's bosom secrets. I was delighted to find it so. Let us read.

TO THE LISTENER.

MADAM,

As I have lately been listening in a region not so much frequented as many other parts of our hemisphere, I have taken the liberty of forwarding to you a few extracts of a Seven Days' Journal, if such would be interesting to your readers, having no doubt but that you will cordially unite with me in recommending even the youngest of your friends to set out speedily on a similar tour, though not to follow my example in publishing to the world what they hear.

I must seek refuge for this folly in signing myself,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

ARCANUM.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS OF A SEVEN DAYS' JOURNAL, WHILE LISTENING TO THE WORLD WITHIN.

SUNDAY.—Admonition in the morning about early rising, to allow more time for private devotions. Replied to, with a promise of amendment. Suggested, whether the duties of the toilet had not better be hurried over a little, rather than the *thoughts* remain unadjusted before public worship. Replied to, with a promise of future consideration.

Resolutions formed at church, from excitement. Expire in the aisle, and buried in the churchyard. Prevents the trouble of conveying them home, or of hearing the bewailings of their kindred virtues.

Reproof about drowsiness, earlier than is usual on a week-day evening, and a comparison of energies employed in the pleasures and service of the world, and the pleasures and service of religion.

MONDAY.—Re-invigorated for accustomed pursuits by the temporary suspension of the Sabbath—busy with plans—motives investigated for benevolent proposals—some approved, some condemned, the majority questionable—so, resolve to consider more attentively the twenty-sixth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. In the evening, some uneasiness from being expected to join in commendations *justly* bestowed on a lady who had offered some personal slight.

TUESDAY.—Introduce new discipline for the better regulation of the microcosm. Strictly prohibit excess of sorrow, which enervates the powers, and unfits for activity. The loss of nothing to be much bewailed in life, which would otherwise be left behind at death. Hear of secret revoltings against this statute. A test of obedience occurs, in painful bereavement. An insurrection, and the insurgents quelled by unworthy motives.

WEDNESDAY.—Plaintiveness mistaken for quiescence, till closely examined. Talk about the unsatisfactory delights of earth; detect inward whisperings at the same moment of ardent attachment. An idol dethroned some time since, set up again with altered vestments—a magnanimous resolve for its entire destruction, associated with mental reservation.

THURSDAY.—Receive flattering compliments—know them to be unmerited, yet smile with complacency—think of it afterwards with utter detestation. Ponder over the disadvantages of residence, till quite dissatisfied, and think it would be better to be anywhere else. Read Biography of very eminent characters of the last century, who are now but little thought about—feel mortified at the certainty of being entirely forgotten in a far less period. Close the day in a steep valley, but find the mental atmosphere somewhat healthful.

FRIDAY.—Awoke with strong sentiments in favour of truth—determine to bring every thing to

this standard, ere invested with importance—bring out the balances—place in first—

Posthumous Fame.—Fill the scale full—heap it up high—still goes up—so determine to care nothing for it.

Unmerited Applause.—Will not so much as lie in the balance, till the self-abasement which followed, was tied all round it; so have no desire for the commodity, with such an envelope.

Locality.—Here and there, found to be of equal weight in the balances.

Expectancy of Future Earthly Bliss.—This will only make weight with the past. So, set about demolishing castles—pulling down fancy pictures—leaving off wrought veils, and breaking magnifying glasses, till quite wearied, and glad that the shadows of the evening invited to repose.

SATURDAY.—Soon after breakfast, receive advice to substitute the approbation of heaven for posthumous fame—an approving conscience, for flattering compliments—contentment with residence, for desire of change—and present comforts, for future expectancies. Ask the opinion of the council-chamber, and submit it to their votes. *Judgment* is well pleased, and gives his without hesitating. *Affections* are divided—some vote for, and some against the change. *Imagination* quite out of humour, till after a private conference with Judgment, then consents to be neutral for a while. *Will*, to whom it fell to give the casting-vote, de-

cided in favour — but ere the day was out, was detected in abetting the recusant. Affections, in concealing some of the old relics, and in screening the Imagination, who had secretly determined to secure at least one pair of magnifying glasses.

ARCANUM.

To the youngest and to the eldest of my readers, whether in the hubbub of a London season, or the loneliness of the sea-shore—whether fashionably, learnedly, or religiously in a bustle, I do most earnestly recommend the example of my correspondent. If any one has read the Extracts of this Journal without recognising the description of something they are familiar with, it proves that they, at least, have never travelled that road. Is it an unfrequented one? I have sometimes feared so. I have long meditated a word on the subject, in some form or other, to my young friends; and now thank my correspondent for thus providing me with an occasion. The dangers of a wrong road are easily enough detected; but when the path is right—when the end is good, and the means are good, and, as far as can be seen, the motive good, who talks or dreams of danger? Yet there is danger, imminent and fatal, to all who float upon the current of external things, without habitual intercourse and most familiar intimacy with themselves. What have I done to-day? He was recorded a wise man of old, who daily asked himself that question; but he was not

wise enough, if that was all. What have I thought, what have I felt, to-day? I have been too busy to think at all; and though I have felt a great deal, I have not had time to reflect upon my feelings. Then be assured, whether you have been waiting upon your own pleasure, or serving your fellow-creatures, or worshipping God, you have done too much, and must diminish your doings ere you will do any thing aright. If the above picture be a just one—and it is a just one—of the human heart, it is not to be trusted with the unbalanced reckoning of a single day.

I would recommend this truth to the especial acceptance of those who are just beginning the day's work of existence. A thousand ways will be presented to them, of rational, useful, pious occupation. A thousand invitations will be pressed upon them, to undertake this thing, and to assist in that. With ardent spirits and a willing mind, they will engage in every thing. To an extent, every added occupation will be gain; exercise will enlarge the powers, selfish indolence will give place to generous activity, and all the mischiefs of a mind disoccupied will be escaped. But, without some caution, they will pass this point—they will get into a bustle—they will run hither and thither in perpetual doing: till not an hour, nay, nor one fitting moment, be remaining, to rest, as it were, upon their oars—to observe what way they have made, to look where the compass points, to fathom the waters they are in. Rocks,

quicksands—sins unsuspected, passions uncorrected, motives unhallowed, and principles unsound—will be the consequence of this self-ignorance; and while the streams seem to flow so brilliant and so pure, the source will be secretly empoisoned and corrupted.

A stated time — I say a stated time, because, though I think habitual and unceasing self-examination, the examination of every feeling as it arises, of every word as it is spoken, and of every action as it is performed, would be more efficient, I know that young minds are not easily disciplined to this; and if a stated time be not set apart for self-examination, Self will for the most part go unexamined. How long a time, is a needless question — Till you have swept and garnished every corner of the house, and left no foulness in it undetected. On the day that we cannot find time enough for this, whatever our occupations have been, they have been too many; and however good they have been, we have done something more than we should have done. The close of every day naturally suggests itself as a proper season for the purpose. The day's events are then fresh upon the memory; the impressions of the last flow of feeling have not been effaced by succeeding tides; and self-justification, that subtle and ingenious thing, has not had time to weave its maze of lies.

The first best thing is, never to forget ourselves in the hurry of occupation—the next best thing is,

to call back the recollection as frequently and certainly as possible. The likeness of ourselves, as God beholds us, as the recording angel writes of us in heaven, is traced within us, and faithfully there only. But we prefer to look at ourselves any where else—to behold ourselves in any other mirror—in our external character or the opinions of those around us. If the day has been well spent, if we have been commended by those we love, if we have been assiduous in the pursuit of knowledge, successful in the pursuit of piety, active in the pursuit of benevolence, self-gratulation lulls the mind to slumber, and we write good upon that day. Mean-time, perhaps, it has been the birth-time of some new corruption, the era of victory to some secret sin, the date of deep offence to the purity of that Eternal Eye before which we each day stand—not as we are in conduct, words, and appearances external, but as we are in motives, feelings, wishes — those only things for which we have no time to spare.

But while I thus seriously recommend the setting of the house in order, I would strongly advocate the keeping of it in order. I do not particularly admire those managers, who let every thing go to wrongs on Friday, because it can be put to rights on Saturday. A mind that acts without reflection, and has recourse to after-examination of itself, may repent its ill-doings, but it cannot undo them.

I remember calling, some time ago, on a lady in the middle rank of life, who is usually very glad to

see me; but on that day she was evidently very sorry to see me: the first salutation, as I entered, was an order to the servant by no means to admit any body. It happened to be a busy day. The cause of the bustle was no affair of mine—the effects were sufficiently apparent. The crumbs of yesterday's dinner were still on the carpet—the breakfast-kettle was still hissing on the fire—the clocks had stood still for want of winding-up—the fires had gone out for want of stirring—children were lurking about with their frocks untied—servants came to the door with paper in their hair and soap-suds on their hands—nothing that was called for could be found, because every thing was out of its place—nothing that was wanted could be used, because it had not been cleaned since it was used before. I hope those of my readers who have never seen the house of a matron on a busy day, will not be offended at the comparison—but it appears to me that this is the very semblance of a mind disordered and disarranged by too much bustle.

No. XXIX.

CONVERSATION.

Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sounds of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name.

COWPER.

I WAS in contemplation, sitting on the dry moss that cushioned the roots of a half-perished oak-tree: surrounding me were all the beauties of the park—of one of those parks, where the interference of art has so concealed itself, that nature seems to be the only workman. And it seemed no more to be made for man, than to be the work of man—the turf looked as if no footstep had ever pressed it—the trees as if no hand had ever pruned a bough from them—the squirrel that leaped upon their branches feared no enemy—the deer that grazed beneath were startled by no sound. From object to object wandering delightedly, not knowing for very pleasure where to rest, my eyes had been especially

attracted by a tree of uncommon beauty, of which the whole trunk and branches were twined with wreaths of Ivy. Its leaf, so elegantly cut, so highly glazed, had a stronger, deeper colouring, than those of the tree it hung upon. The twining curvature of the branches gracefully contrasted with the angular projections of the boughs that supported it. The tree, enveloped in this rich drapery, seemed there but as a support to its more splendid load. I thought——A footstep on the turf broke the train of my reflections, and a woodman passed by where I was sitting; in one hand he bore a small hatchet, with the other balanced on his shoulder a bundle of osier twigs; from his huge leathern pocket projected the handles of the hammer and the pruning knife. He passed immediately to the tree I had been admiring, and with pitiless activity began to level the hatchet at the roots of the Ivy, tore it branch by branch from where it hung, and heaping it together, bound it with a thong, as if prepared for burning. It was soon done. I rose hastily, and approaching the woodman, I said, "Why have you destroyed so beautiful an object?" "Beautiful!" he answered; "that is a growing tree—it will be worth hundreds—the Ivy would soon have killed it, and made it, like itself, scarce fit for burning." My poetic meditations took flight at this prosaic truth, and, unable to recall them, I followed the woodman, to see what other justice he was about to execute on pernicious beauty. He knew his errand, it seemed;

and over brake and brier took his long, heavy strides to a thicker and more sheltered corner of the park. Here the wood, lower and more closely planted, had been formed into a sheltered walk, and terminated in a rustic bower. The first thing that struck me was the most splendid Woodbine I ever looked upon —it was not trained, it was not tied—it threw itself at random over the bushes that were about it, which it literally smothered with its golden flowers, and came again to the ground for want of something to support it. The woodman walked up to it, and began with some caution to raise the boughs. "This," I said, "must at least be harmless here?"—"Harmless enough," he answered me; "but there is that Holly growing up behind it. In a little time it will overhang the Honeysuckle, and the dropping from the boughs will kill it. I am only going to turn its branches over that bower, where it will have sun and air, and something to support it." I was not quite content—it looked so careless, so natural, so beautiful, where it was—though, left there another season, it would have died.

Must that which is beautiful be removed, when it endangers something of more value than itself? Must that which in its natural growth appeared so flourishing and fair, be trained and pruned, lest it perish in its loveliness? And may we be less provident of our Master's garden, than the rude woodman of his lord's domains? May we see what is brilliant overbearing and destroying what is valuable, amuse

ourselves with its attractions, and pay no regard to the effects? May we leave the residue of native beauty in our bosoms to grow as it will, and dispose of itself as it may, for the brief interval of time, when it should be trained and treasured for eternity, at whatever sacrifice of present bent and inclination?

I was led to these reflections, by a request that I would say something more than I have already said on the subject of CONVERSATION; a most important power committed by Heaven to our care, and, for the most part, suffered to luxuriate with most irregular and unchecked redundance. The gift of Conversation is that which seems eminently to distinguish the human being from the brute, his fellow in many things, in some his superior. It is a power, too, not likely to terminate with our mortal existence: but, in whatever manner continued, must go with us to eternity, to hold celestial converse in the presence of God, and speak forth for ever the praises of his love. Of such a power it would scarcely seem necessary to urge the importance, did it not appear on observation that nobody regards it—nobody lays it to heart that God has said, "Every idle word will I bring into judgment." When I say *nobody,* I limit my meaning to the compass within which all my listenings are made, and the sphere in which I suppose my remarks to circulate. I particularly desire it should be considered that I write for a certain class, and that I hear nothing and say nothing, and design not to censure or expose any thing, that lies beyond

this compass. I write for youth, or for that early womanhood on which the greater number of my readers are just about to enter, or for those of older years who have an immediate influence on these. And as I speak only for them, so I would be understood to speak only of them, however generally I may seem to express myself. If any will take the hint for whom it is not intended—of which, in some instances, the Listener has received very gratifying testimony—I would still deprecate the feelings of those who may fancy themselves attacked, when they are not understood to be upon the field.

In speaking of the misuse, or at best the waste, habitually made of our conversational powers, I have in mind exclusively the domestic circle—the home-talk of the family, or the communications of intimacy. In company, as generally so called, it seldom rests with the young female to give the tone to the conversation—she may be accessory to its frivolity, or a sharer in its usefulness, and will be surely responsible for her own words, because she might speak better or be silent, and others' wrong will not excuse us; but it is not there that responsibility is quite her own, neither is it there that the evil is the greatest. We speak well for shame before men, while we care not for conscience how we speak before God.

When my attention had been called to this subject, I determined to listen for one day to the habitual conversation, or talk, or speech, whichever is the better word, of a family circle of very cultivated and

religious young people, and to my own, as that day a member of the circle. If I had written on a tablet every word that was spoken, from the first intonation of voices giving notice to those in bed that somebody is up, to the prolonged gossip of the chamber at midnight—including the contributions of a few morning callers, and the stimulus of a chance visitor in the evening—I might submit it to perusal, and leave the comment to the judgment of the reader. This I did not—but of the purport of it all, I made very exact memoranda; and I risk no miscalculation when I assert that the sum of it was this:—a large portion were words, for the utterance of which no possible motive could be found—neither the speaker nor the hearer being interested in them, nor meaning any thing, nor understanding any thing by them. Another portion were of that dubious nature, that, though it would seem harsh to call them false, they wanted every character of simple, unexaggerated truth. Another part were decidedly, though not intentionally, harmful; because they were calculated to give pain to those who heard them, or depreciate those who were the subject of them. A fourth portion of our words I found to be of a very remarkable character: they were in exact opposition to our sentiments—expressions appropriate to a condition in which there should be no God, no Providence, no Immortality; but, without any purpose of impugning it, in no way applicable to our actual state of existence. In the fifth division—I am sorry to say not

the smallest—I placed those words of which it is said that out of the heart the mouth speaketh, and which proved that our hearts were not wholly occupied with that charity which is the bond of perfectness. Of these were the angry words, the proud words, the envious words, the boastful words, the impatient words, the selfish words, which did not so much belie as betray our actual meaning. And under another head, I ranged communications respecting others that had better not have been made, and the repetition of words that had better never have been spoken, much less repeated. If these portions of our conversation could not be in the mass pronounced evil, it will not be contended that any were good; therefore the whole may be marked off as a waste of powers, and must be entirely subtracted from, if not set against the product, when the reckoning for our talents shall be required. Those who are not in the habit of self-examination, will scarcely believe, when all this has been withdrawn, how little of the use of speech remained to be examined. A few expressions of affectionate feeling and benevolent sympathy, a very little communication of intellectual enjoyment, a touch or two of innocent humour intended to please, were like beautiful blossoms scattered here and there on an ill-thriven tree. And rarer still than the flowers, when I looked for the abiding fruits of all our interchange of words, they were not to be found. Of all I had spoken or heard, I could not fix upon one word by which permanent

good had been done, or been even intended by the speaker—by which God had been honoured, or man benefited, or ourselves amended. Even when the most serious subjects had been alluded to, all the words might have been distributed among the preceding heads—unless we form another for that fearful license with which young people laugh, and talk, and cavil, and play off their dangerous witticisms, upon things most sacred, and persons who should be sacred for the things' sake; their hearts never misgiving them that they are not all the time talking very religiously.

It will be answered—for we would rather excuse ourselves than amend—that this careless interchange of words is all very well—it is natural and agreeable, and lightens the daily task of life—we cannot be always talking to the purpose—we need not be perpetually on the subject of religion, or making a parade of our knowledge and acquirements—talking nonsense is very agreeable, and often evinces more talent than solid discourse. To an extent this is true—and as far as it is so, we would abridge nothing of the freedom of social intercourse. The woodman did not root up all the ivy, nor turn from their native growth all the woodbines of the park. But we must take care that what is agreeable does not overbear what is permanently valuable: and that the indulgence of natural propensities does not work our destruction. Much of the talk I have described is not innocent and is not agreeable; and, instead of

lightening the task of life, adds many an item to the burden's weight, and many a pang to the trial's bitterness. I have no doubt that much of our daily discourse bears the positive character of sin. Still more, not directly sinful, comes under the Apostle's warning against "foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient;" by which, I imagine, he meant not to forbid innocent mirth on right subjects and at right times, but that habitual levity of discourse that bespeaks a mind taking no responsibility for the utterance of the lips; forgetting itself, as it were, in the intoxication of idle talk—a position "not convenient" indeed, for one prone to sin and encompassed with temptation, enlisted for battle, and in the midst of enemies. But my aim is not so much to prove that we do harm with this invaluable gift, as that we are bound to do more good with it than we do. I think we might make it more conducive to the rational and real enjoyments of life, to the general sum of human happiness, to the spiritual improvement of each other and ourselves, the credit of religion, and the glory of God. And so far as we could do this, and do not, our plea of harmlessness can deserve only the reception of the servant with his buried talent.

Certainly it is not desirable to be always talking of religion. In the way in which it is too generally handled by the inconsiderate, I would rather they never talked of it. But we may talk religiously, without talking of religion—we may speak as if

God were never forgotten, but as much present to our recollection, as He is actually present as a witness and observer of our words; and so avoid every expression that consists not with our faith. As to the display that might appear in speaking always rationally, proud, vain, and selfish would be all the words spoken from such a motive: but that sort of communication which affords improvement, and gives useful information, is not necessarily a display of talent—it may be interchanged where no talent is. Fruitful in excuses, we plead that conversation is a spontaneous and uncultivated growth—the moment it should become studied, artificial, and constrained, it would lose its charm. Let us remember that this heaven-implanted flower, like every other blossom that once decked the bowers of Eden, and may some time blow again in a yet fairer garden, has had no place to grow on in the interval, but an unkept and fallow soil—and, like the produce of some fetid marsh, it may spread luxuriantly, but grows rank and worthless. It is no longer best as nature produces it. We must not root it out, and leave the place desolate—but we must enclose it, and prune it, and direct its growth, and mend the soil about it; not to change its native characters, but to restore them. This is true of our feelings, our affections, and all that is within us; and it is true of our words, which are no more than the expression of these. We would not have art take the place of nature, nor get up speeches by measure,

and words by rule; keep silence till we have something very important to say; utter wise sentences while our hearts are foolish, and pious phrases while our thoughts are earthly, and benevolent speeches while our feelings are unkind—this would be to pick the blossoms from the fig-tree and stick them on the brier, in hope to gather fruit from it. But let us have a motive for our words, and let that motive be a good one—let us have a design in our words, and let that design be a good one—let us have a meaning in all we say, and let the meaning be a right one. Nay, so far are we from this, perhaps it would have been enough as a first step to say, Let us be convinced that our powers of speech are a gift for which we are responsible. Many of us, I doubt, have never yet had any intention of doing good by our daily domestic interchange of words—by good I mean what I have explained before—to promote happiness, give innocent pleasure, communicate desirable knowledge, cultivate kindly affection, amend the heart, or glorify God. Have we ever reflected that for this our speech was given, and habitually disposed ourselves to make this use of it? The inquiry might soon be answered. Take a day—examine it through—what have we done with the gift? What have we meant to do? The answer of most days will be, We have done harm by accident—we meant to do nothing.

I speak not of those who, under the meridian light of truth, have drunk so deeply of self-know-

ledge and of self-reproof, that their thoughts and words, the misuse of talents, and the waste of powers, are among those things of which the remembrance is grievous to them, the burden is intolerable. They will not carelessly add to that grievous remembrance, and increase that intolerable burden. Their boughs have been already withered and overborne by the embraces of that earthliness which grew unchecked around them. Their branches have enough run to waste and perished, for want of timely training and support; and left them to perpetual, painful, and sometimes unsuccessful struggles against obstinate and deep-rooted habit. These need no persuasion; but well might the young be persuaded by them to look early to the garden committed to their keeping.

No. XXX.

COUSIN MABEL.

He who glides smoothly o'er life's waveless sea,
Nor feels the chilling blast of misery,
Looks on the victim by the whirlwind toss'd,
And marvels how his peace was wreck'd or lost.

BIRD.

THERE is a proverbial saying of some antiquity, and not wanting in wisdom, that "Listeners never hear any good of themselves." When the motive for furtive observation is a bad one—impertinent curiosity or designing malice—it is most probable that they will not—or, if they do, there is likely to come with the stolen commendation, an uncomfortable consciousness that they do not deserve it. But I, who listen honestly and openly in the broad light of day, and never hear any thing but what every body else has heard, and no one had any intention to conceal, I may hope to be exempted from the sentence of this proverb; and, if I should have chanced to overhear a conversation of which I was the subject, may be excused for repeating it, that proverb notwithstanding.

It was so, that once—I cannot tell how it came

to be so, but it was—that a certain large house, square and white, not very far from the Regent's Park, had windows to the ground. It was at the beginning of June—June this year was very warm, therefore it was not surprising that the windows were open, though at the close of the evening, and with lights burning. A lighted chamber, filled with living figures, is an object so pictorial, no one with a painter's eye can pass it unobserved. Myself I never can—I have of this kind no greater pleasure, than to creep at dusk before a row of cottages, and through an uncurtained window, by favour of an illuminated rush, or a candle of scarcely more circumference, to see the unconscious inmates perform their evening task, or enjoy their evening's idleness, mindless of observation from without: the attitudes of the rustic figures, the distinct outline with the colouring obscured, gives an effect to objects in themselves not beautiful, and by the broad daylight scarcely observable. It is true, that in a drawing-room, too gaily illuminated for any to be obscured, with patent lamps, instead of rushlights, and well-dressed ladies, instead of rude peasants and half-naked children, the painter's vision is considerably less poetic; and, on the occasion referred to, I should certainly have passed on without a pause, had not something particularly arrested my attention. About the window was a group of some half-dozen figures, purporting to be ladies somewhere in their fourth lustrum—I should think nearer the end than the

beginning of it. And in the hand of one, closed, but with the finger in, as if it had just been read, there was a little book—a sort of pamphlet-looking octavo, with a light-brownish cover, so much like some I am acquainted with, that I could not but fancy it to be the same. The ladies were in conversation very earnestly, and I fancied again it seemed to be about the book. By approaching a little, I could easily hear, for the night was still, and they spoke loud. I thought of the aforesaid proverb, and was about to go away, when, looking again within, I perceived that none but *young* ladies were there. By the shadows of lesser figures in the distance, I began to apprehend it was a school, or a place of education of some sort; extremely comfortable, as, contrary to my former observations, I must allow, it looked. This was the Listener's peculiar province. A better motive than curiosity arose. It was desirable, for my young readers' sake, that I should know the effect of my observations on their minds; that if it had been other than I desired, I might take occasion to correct my own mistake or theirs. Certain of the goodness of my motive, and of the use to be made of what I heard, I resolved to take the risk of its not being agreeable to myself, and cautiously approached the window. The Listener was, as I had fancied, the subject of discussion: I could, of course, not see the number; but I soon found it was one or other of my papers upon Good humour. If I repeat any thing favourable to myself, I beg my

doing so may not be construed into a desire to circulate my own praises—my motive will be shortly seen. The ladies were not, as I found, quite satisfied with my definitions of Good temper and Good humour; some thought the terms should have been Good temper and Good disposition, expelling poor Good humour altogether. The criticisms, however, were but few, while the papers, upon the whole, were treated with unbounded applause. The girls declared that nothing could be more natural—they had witnessed all and every of the circumstances related, even to the unboiled egg, the open window, and the kicking of the dog. What wonder, with the experience of full fifteen years, and some three more to that? One knew an old woman who died exactly so—and one a young girl who was exactly like this—another remembered a certain party in which the very thing happened—another had the whole of her last holidays spoiled by the ill humour of her friends, and seemed not without apprehension that the next would be so too; unless the Listener had been there before her, and carried conviction and reformation on its wing. And then came the praises. Nothing could be more desirable than to expose and ridicule such inconsistencies. They had thought at the time it was all exceedingly sinful—and that aunts, cousins, friends—for I grieve to say, contrary to what experience would lead us to expect, these ladies' strictures were becoming very personal—had shown tempers very little consistent with Christian princi-

ples, the wisdom of age, and the suavity of youth. They thought such a one could not read the character of Amelia, without applying it to herself. Such a one must surely take the hint. They hoped the world would mend by it, and then they should not be annoyed as they had been. They should never see any one out of humour, without thinking of it, and longing to read it to them, that they might see themselves and be ashamed. I was extremely obliged to my friends—as how could I be otherwise?—and so doubtless is the world, and all those whom they desired to correct by my means—particularly as the object was their own immediate benefit. I thanked them in the silence of my heart, and walked away.

In the vacation immediately following this event, I was introduced to a family, where, as a part of the domestic circle, I quickly recognised two of my *ci-devant* friends of the window—no wonder I remembered them, for they were the two that had been loudest in my praise. Certainly had I wanted a portrait of Good humour, I could not have chosen better than in these two girls. They were fresh and beautiful as the first blush of morning. Their bright blue eyes sparkled with perpetual glee—their fine elastic forms seemed equally at ease in motion and at rest—mirth played innocently on their ruby lips. I can compare them to nothing but the first-blown rose of summer, before one drop of rain has soiled its petals. The cherished objects of parental care, surrounded with luxury, and expectant of future

wealth, they seemed to live but to be loved, to breathe but to be happy.

It chanced that, in this family, besides the parents and some other inmates, there was one isolated being remarkably in contrast with the rest. She might be thirty, she might be forty, or almost fifty—it did not signify—she looked as if she thought so. Her features might not have been always without interest—but in the drawn and half-shut nostril, and the close pressure of the lips, there was an expression not altogether pleasing. Green and yellow sickliness was the predominant character; though in the dim, diminished eye, an acute observer might still discover what had once been vivacity and feeling. Mabel was but little past the age of her beautiful cousins, when in one day the promise of her life was blighted. Sorrow, acting upon a mind enervated by indulgence, and a constitution naturally weak, implanted the seeds of a chronic disorder, which, without immediately tending to the dissolution of life, had decided the tenor of it to be that of perpetual and remediless sickness. When Mabel's heart became a joyless blank, she had not wherewith to fill it from above. She became fretful from disappointment, and irritable from suffering; and the world, that saw the change, but knew nothing of the cause, still further soured her temper by harshness and neglect. Now, she was a devoted Christian; and, in becoming so, had become benevolent, and generally cheerful. Nobody heard Mabel complain of the early

blighting of her earthly hopes, or the perpetual suffering of which she was the victim; or speak of the Providence that assigned her so hard a portion, but in terms of grateful acknowledgment. But habit had rooted in her temper what it had written on her features—she was still fretful and still irritable. This every body saw, and every body complained of; and nobody liked poor Mabel. The parents of this family, in which she resided, knew her story and her worth, bore with her ill-humours, and tenderly administered to her sufferings. My young friends, I am sorry to say, showed no such consideration. Cousin Mabel was the object of their supreme contempt, and the perpetual subject of their mirth.

As the Listener is a person perfectly unknown, the ladies had no suspicion such a one was amongst them; and I had again to hear myself produced, quoted, and extolled, whenever the girls thought they had reason to complain of their cousin's peevishness. "I wish she was away," said Susan one day to Emily; "she is the plague of the house. If she is ill, I cannot think why she does not die. I'm sure nobody would miss her." Susan did not know that Mabel had been all that day in the abodes of misery, spending her feeble powers in giving ease and consolation to the afflicted, paid with the widow's blessing and the orphan's smiles, and many an artless prayer that her days might be prolonged. "I think," said Emily one night to Susan, "cousin Mabel is a great hypocrite. The Listener says if people are religious,

they should be good-humoured. Did you observe what a fit of ill-humour she took this afternoon about nobody knows what—something I said that did not please her? One cannot be always thinking of what one says, for fear of putting people in a fret." Emily did not know that Mabel, conscious of having sinned that day before God, by the indulgence of a fretful and impatient temper, was at that moment in tears and on her knees, imploring Heaven to subdue an evil, for which her greatest grief was that it dishonoured religion; and entreating that her young cousins, the objects of her pious solicitude, however they might despise her for her infirmities, might not be prejudiced against religion on her account. Emily and Susan saw the exterior only. Once a-day or twice a-day, or as often as may be, they saw a look of impatience, or heard a fretful word, or were put aside from their purposes by a complaint of annoyance; and though they neither quarrelled with their cousin nor directly opposed her—for they were thoroughly good-humoured—twenty times a-day they hurt her feelings by sideway glances, broad hints, playful annoyances, and unnecessary trials of her temper; to amuse themselves, or, as they were pleased to say, to cure her of being so touchy. Emily and Susan thought their cousin had a selfish heart, considering only her own convenience, putting every body out of the way because she was sick. They did not see how often Mabel's eyes were filled with tears at their remarks, when no words escaped her

—how often she suffered acute pain from heat, or cold, or noise, because she would not cross their inclinations—how often, while they were playfully trying to excite her temper, her eyes were uplifted to Heaven for help to restrain it. Emily and Susan never suspected that their own hearts were selfish, when, in the enjoyment of such abundant blessings, health, strength, and spirits, limbs that had never ached, and hearts that had never known a care, they thought it not worth while to spare the feelings or study the convenience of a poor child of sorrow, blighted and withered at the first dawn of life, with nothing to support her since, and sweeten her existence now, but the love of God and the kindness of those about her. But this let me say to them, if, having so much approved of one Listener, they do me the favour to peruse another:—The being of whose temper they were so impatient, and whose religion they in consequence presumed to doubt, with her small powers and enfeebled frame, conferred more benefits on humanity in one month than they in all their years—God had more thanks for her afflictions than ever He had for their prosperity—and she, with every thing mental and physical to contend against, had made more sacrifices, and put more constraint upon herself for their pleasure, than they, with every thing at command, had done for hers.

Leaving these, my particular friends, to speak to

others, who, I hope, may be as much so, though I do not know it—let me add, that if it be our duty, as it is, to subdue as much as possible and control our natural defects of temper, it is not less—nay, it is far more—the duty of the young, the light-hearted, and the happy, to bear with, and excuse, and by all means to spare, the defects of temper they perceive in others. Spoiled, perhaps, by an education not of their own choosing—soured, perhaps, by injuries not of their deserving—or subjected by the hand of Heaven to some organic disease of which mind as well as body is the victim—little does the lively healthful spirit know what these may suffer, from the restless humour that consumes their peace, from the disease that causes it, from the influence of external things upon their frame, and above all, from a consciousness of the wrong they are doing! Did we know what it is, after nights of sleeplessness, to arise to some charge to which, perhaps, our spirits are unequal—to find every nerve affected by the vapours of the morning—to feel every word that is spoken jar upon our senses as upon some fretted sore—to go wearily, though willingly, through the day's work, struggling in vain against the evil humours that assail us—and to lie down at night, defeated, and ashamed, and self-reproached, for the day's impatience and ill humour—we should learn a lesson which as yet, perhaps, we know not; and, it may be, more than one; for while we learned forbearance,

and indulgence, and compassion, we should not unlikely learn more gratitude to Heaven than we ever yet have felt; and, instead of taking merit to ourselves for what was nature's gift, be confounded and ashamed that we have used it so selfishly, and so thoughtlessly possessed it.

No. XXXI.

SACRED MUSIC.

Then crown'd again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
The charming song, and waken raptures high;
No one except, no voice but well could join
Melodious part; such concord is in heaven.

MILTON.

MR LISTENER,

BUT a month ago, I was invited to pass a fortnight at the house of an old and valued friend of my mother's, whom I had never seen. Her letters, however, breathed the tone of true piety, and as I was informed she had, though early left a widow, brought up a son and daughters in an exemplary manner, I had very little doubt but that my visit would prove very satisfactory. When I arrived at the pleasant mansion of Mrs Rivers, I found only the female part of the family at home. I was welcomed by her and her daughters with real cordiality: I was much pleased with the lady of the house, and I thought the young ladies elegant and amiable. In the time which elapsed before dinner, they were busily engaged in

working for the poor; and I found by their conversation that they were deeply interested for the spiritual as well as temporal welfare of their poor dependents. I also discovered that they were well informed and accomplished; not by their quoting all the books they could remember, or by their displaying all their portfolios of drawings, but by the general rational tone of their discourse, and by the very pretty landscapes and figures of their designing which ornamented the drawing-room. After dinner had passed off, and coffee had made its appearance, a pause ensued in our conversation, when Mrs Rivers asked me if I was fond of music. On my replying in the affirmative, the two young ladies rose, and with great alacrity proposed playing to me. And while Caroline was arranging the music and pianoforte, and Laura tuning the harp, I could not forbear reflecting how often the pleasure awakened by the preparation of music, had been damped by the cold indifference of the performers, by the reluctance with which they consented, and by the ill humour frequently displayed. But nothing of this kind now alloyed my enjoyment, and, after listening to some very pretty English and Italian songs, chastely and beautifully executed, Mrs Rivers said, "Come, let us have some sacred music." The young ladies complied; and, to a common observer, it might seem as readily as they had done before; but it might be fancy, or, did I not see less of alacrity, I certainly did see a very great willingness to finish the per-

formance. When they had retired to rest, their mother and I continued chatting. She spoke of the piety and amiability of her girls, and, with the parent's tears springing to her eyes, she gave many instances of their self-denial, their charity, and self-control. From this subject we wandered to education, and she asked me how I liked their music and singing. I answered, as in truth I might, that seldom had I heard such rich execution, tempered with such judgment and expression. "I am heartily glad to hear it," rejoined Mrs R.; "for their music, first and last, has cost me a thousand pounds, and they have practised six hours every day for many years; but I do wish they would sing a hymn at our family devotions: the servants like it, and would gladly join, if they would lead, but my daughters do not seem to like it, though I tell them they have no idea how it increases the devotion of the lower orders." The day after this conversation was Sunday, and we went to their parish church. Like many country churches, it possessed no organ, but the girls of the Sunday school, and a few young men and women, had been instructed by the parish-clerk; and viler squalling, miscalled singing, did I never hear. But judge of my astonishment, Mr Listener, when I saw that, though my young friends held, like most of the congregation, a hymn-book in their hands, yet there was certainly no singing on their part; no, not even did I see a movement of the lip. At dinner, Mrs R. deeply lamented the torture which every one's

ear must be subject to while hearing the singing in their church; "but," added she, "the parish is poor, and cannot afford to pay a good instructor." I then could not forbear mentioning that the instruction of them by the young ladies might effect some reformation. To my great astonishment, they both replied, that they did not think it of such importance; that it did not signify, and that it would be a great deal of trouble. I assured them that twice or thrice a-week would fully answer the end designed, and I could not forbear saying, that no part of the worship of God could be of small importance. Mrs Rivers seconded my opinion, but they remained firm, and here the subject dropped. And when I got into the retirement of my chamber that night, I was puzzled for some time to find out the great objection to singing in church themselves, or teaching others to sing. And when I reflected on the express injunction of the Apostle, and on the great help that harmony is, as Mrs R. observed, to the devotion of many, I wondered why two ladies, on whose music so much expense and pains had been bestowed, should think scorn to dedicate some part of their time and talents to the Almighty, (who gave them their voice and execution), in praising Him themselves, or in teaching others to praise. At last, Mr Listener, I resolved to apply to you, and resolved to ask you for a solution of my doubts; and if you will tell me why a church is a place in which nobody with a good voice may sing, though every body with a bad one

may do their utmost to annoy and distract the congregation; and what there is in sacred music, instantly to damp all ardour in the performers; and why those who could execute it with fervour, neglect, and then pay those to perform it on whose lips the sacred words become mockery and profanation, you will be doing great service to many besides

Your constant reader,

EUGENIA.

The Listener wishes these questions were more difficult to answer than they are, or that there could be any doubt of the origin of these strange discrepancies. When man was created, his person beautified, and his mind endowed, and placed in the midst of a material creation, whose yet hidden properties he was to discover and improve into sources of most exquisite delights, and instruments of exercise to his own yet unknown faculties, those personal beauties, those mental endowments, and those material properties, had all one purpose and one end—the service of God, and the happiness of man—for both were then but one, and could not be disunited. When these ends parted, and man chose himself a happiness independent of his Maker, he took to his own share these splendid gifts, these treasured materials of delight, these stores of intellect—another's workmanship—and, regardless altogether of the purpose

of their creation, devoted them to his own pleasure, honour, or advantage, or what, in his corruption, he considered such. God let it be. He let his beautiful world become a prison-house of crime, and his splendid gifts the instruments of sin. With those powers that he had created for his glory and service he let his creatures make themselves a happiness to which he was no party; till, in the revel of possession, they found that they could do without the Giver. Time went on—the beginning was forgotten — man no more remembers how he got these powers, and for what purpose he originally had them—he finds himself in possession, calls them his, and sets about to do with them what he pleases—holds himself responsible to no one for their use, and thinks it a great matter of boast if he does no harm with them. And now, when God has returned to claim his own, and in the hearts of many has reunited those long-separated ends of existence, and taught us again that we must live for Him, and find happiness in Him, and devote ourselves to his service,— stupified by habit and misled by custom, false in our tastes and perverted in our feelings, we are slow to give back to Him the embezzled property. Some, in the confusion of their judgment, and the honesty of their purpose, throw away these splendid gifts—charge on their powers the folly they have wrought with them, and conceive it their duty to lay talents, intellect, and feeling, all aside, as parts of that vanity they are called on to forego. Others, more

rational in the work of excision, and not quite so honest, take shelter in the plea of "innocency,"—and finding that to maintain this plea costs them trouble enough, they will not venture on the deeper question of "utility." And so, with all our religion, God's service—ay, and our own happiness too—remain defrauded of those gifts and powers that were solely destined to promote them.

Music is one of these. It must have been the gift of God. Man did not communicate to the extended wire its vibrations—man did not give to the surrounding air its undulatory motion—man did not organise the ear to such exact responsiveness, or the brain to such acute sensibility of what the ear conveys. Man could not have made music, had God not intended it. The power was his, and the gift was his—man has possession, and thinks it his own. It administers to his pleasures—it buys him applause of men—it feeds his unhallowed passions, drives away thought, and helps to make him happy, in forgetfulness of what he is and is to be. For these purposes, the worldly parent, if she finds this talent in her child, takes possession of it, expends upon it, as above described, no small portion of another talent committed to her keeping, and occupies with it a fourth, or a sixth, or an eighth part of her children's early years—perhaps the only years that ever will be theirs—and her heart never misgives her that she has perverted the gift, or defrauded the Giver of this talent. The Christian mother follows her

example, though not with the same motive. The talent is now divested of all unhallowed purposes and dangerous effects. It is acquired without vanity, and used without ostentation. Instead of leading the young performer into company, to exhibit herself for admiration, it now contributes to make the excitement of mixed society unnecessary, by supplying her with innocent amusement at home. Never let the Listener be supposed to say a word against the use that is made, in such families, of this delightful talent—the evening recreation of a well-spent day—the home festival of domestic cheerfulness and affection—or the solace, perhaps, of some anxious, lonely hour. I believe that music stands thus in many families, entirely divested of every injurious application, and administering to one part of the Creator's purpose—the happiness of man. But I do question if it is made any where, so much as it might be, subservient to the other—the service and honour of the Giver—or even to the first, in the best and highest sense of the word *happiness*.

To consider at first in private, Do we not all know how difficult it is to keep God always in our thoughts, to cultivate perpetual intercourse with Him in our hearts, and to have before us such an abiding sense of his presence, as to be our guardian at once from danger and from sin? To do this, is the prevailing desire—at least, I suppose so—of every Christian bosom; and yet, while surrounded with things sensible and earthly, it is the most difficult

task we have to perform. If music is the resource of our lighter hours, might it not be the means of bringing God into our thoughts, rather than of driving him out of them by the introduction of other images? If it be the solace of our sadness, might it not better serve the purpose, by bringing, together with its soothing melody, the remembrance and images of joys yet unseen, and hopes as yet unrealised: in which, rather than in the mere physical impression of the sound upon our outward organs, the mind might forget, or find a sedative for, its anxieties? Might not music, by those who like it, be had recourse to, for these express purposes, whenever the bosom seems to need it? If music, under some of its forms, is calculated to excite the passions and intoxicate the spirits, it is, in others, eminently calculated to allay and pacify, to soften and subdue them. I believe it is capable of exercising a permanent and essential influence on the character in awakening the gentler dispositions of the mind, and putting to rest the more turbulent. I should, in this persuasion, be extremely anxious to cultivate a love of music in young people, whether they play themselves or not, and be very sorry if they showed a dislike to it. I would make it a part of their education with this view, and lead them to this use of it. To still the stormy passions, to soothe the irritated feelings, to elevate the sensual mind, and recall to seriousness the dissipated mind, would be a use of music acceptable indeed to Him who wills nothing

so much as the holiness of his creatures, and their restoration to the likeness of his spotless purity. There are many who feel music thus, and for this desire it. And, I dare say, there are more Listeners than one, who, coming into musical society after a day of hurried occupation, or anxious thoughtfulness, have hoped, amid the concord of sweet sounds, to compose their agitated spirits, and elevate their earth-bound thoughts; and by the aid of Handel or Mozart, have been very near succeeding, when a noisy Italian bravura, or a flippant French madrigal, has put an end to their hopes, and almost to their patience.

In family devotion, music might be made far more useful and delightful than it is—though I am aware that in some families it is so used. Perhaps it might be made of more importance. The younger part of the family, on whose music so much is expending, might be led to consider it as their especial care, and one of the chief objects of the instruction they are receiving. How beautiful and how invaluable, in a young mind, is the habit of referring every thing they receive, or do, to some higher end than that of temporal advantage or transient gratification!

In our public service, the musical department is indeed deplorable. Our psalms are solemn prayers or devout praises, as much addressed to Heaven as any part of the service. As such, it is difficult to understand why the minister is not responsible for the performance of this, as well as the remainder of

the holy ministration; that it should seem to be the business of the clerk, an illiterate always, and generally not a pious man; and perhaps some dozen idlers, his companions, on whose taste and feeling is to depend this part of our devotions. The congregation may join, it is true—that is, they may if they can—but in excuse for the ladies my correspondent has censured, I must confess that, from the choice of tunes, or the method of execution, it is not always possible. I doubt not there is in every village, parish, or congregation, musical talent enough, and dearly enough purchased, to make melody meet to be offered as prayer in the courts of the Most High; to instruct those who are willing to be taught, especially the children—and why not others of the poor, their neighbours and dependents?—no unfavourable opportunity of teaching them to understand and feel this, part of the service. And if, under the sanction and direction of the minister, the charge of the psalmody were thus put into their hands—of course, I do not mean the public charge, but the choice of the music—without preventing any one from joining, I think they might defy the clerk and his companions to destroy their harmony.

Perhaps our female friends will say this rests not with them—they cannot assume a charge not offered them. But my correspondent has produced a case in which they were found unwilling. I can imagine a case in which the minister, whose approbation was necessary, would be their father, or their well-known

friend; or where their rank and influence in the parish would secure a glad compliance, should the proposal come from them. And then how potent is example! Successful and approved in one congregation, it would come to be earnestly solicited in another; and the ladies might, as in most cases they ought to, wait the request. But even where the direction of the singing is not in their hands, but conducted on the present system, we still do not see how the musical ladies of a congregation could better use their expensive accomplishment, than by teaching the children of the schools, and others of the poor, to join with feeling, correctness, and moderation; by which the clerk might be even yet outsung. If I have, in these remarks, gone out of my province, they rose out of the observations of my correspondent, of which every listener in our churches must feel the justness.

For the rest, if it be thought that I have been dreaming, instead of listening, and, mindless of what is daily before my eyes and in my ears, have let imagination range in things that have no reality; if it be said that music is an innocent plaything of man's secular taste, in which we may expend as much time as we please, and as much money as we please, and need render no account, it being only intended for our amusement: I think that such an opinion is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, to our condition on earth, and preparation for eternity; and I believe that God will sometime vindicate his pur-

poses in all that he has created, material or intellectual, and convince us that he gave us all the powers we have for better uses than we have made of them. When the children of Zion were captives in Babylon, they hung their harps upon the willows, and forgot their country songs—how could they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?—their hearts were unstrung, and tuneless as their harps. But when they returned to Jerusalem, doubtless they strung the chords afresh, and learned anew the forgotten music, and sang again the song that Moses taught them, the psalms their kings and prophets left them. So, should the corrupted world return to the God it has forsaken, and the knowledge of him be established in all the earth, and sin and Satan be expelled from it, this talent, and every other, will find the use for which it was intended—will be made to subserve the holiness, as well as the happiness, of man; and, before all things, the glory and worship of the Lord. How shall we think, then, of the long misuse? Or, if we never see a time when the earth shall be the Lord's, and the fulness of beauty with which he filled it be recovered from corruption, should we not as individuals, restored ourselves, endeavour to restore every thing to the holy purpose of its first creation?

No. XXXII.

GOODMAN HODGE.

The actions of men are oftener determined by their characters than by their interest; their conduct takes its colour more from their acquired tastes, inclinations, and habits, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good .... The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections, and habits; the elements of character, and masters of action.

"ONCE on a time"—this is the way stories used to begin; and I am partial to it, because it is among the remotest recollections of my life, though I scarcely expect the memory of my readers will extend to a period of so much rudeness in nursery lore. My story is truth—if it seems incredible in the reading, let judgment wait the issue for the proof. There was a man, a day-labourer he had been; but having saved a little money from his earnings, he had now a tiny cottage of his own. Ambition, like many other things, enlarges in the feeding; and for ten years past, his enjoyment of the cottage had been disturbed by desire for a field that lay beside it. The time came—the savings amounted to exactly

the right sum, and the goodman bought the field. It was at this time I became acquainted with him, because, in some of my listening excursious, my path lay through this ground; and aware of the importance of the business on which I was intent, he never objected to let me pass. If I heard any thing by the way, it was but consistent with my profession; and if I tell what I heard, it is for others' benefit, not for the goodman's wrong. It was a small stony field: it had produced nothing yet, and did not look as if it intended it. One day, as I passed, I asked the goodman what he meant to plant. He said, "it was to grow wheat by and by; but being fallow ground, it would want a good deal of cultivating; it would be some time first:" and so indeed I thought —more particularly as the goodman had expended all his substance in purchase of the field, and had not money left to buy a load of manure, or scarcely a spade to dig it. He did dig it, however, for I saw him often at the work: whether he sowed it I cannot say — most likely not, for nothing came up. Possession, still, is great enjoyment; as every one knows, who has property that makes no returns; and for the first year, my goodman was quite happy in the consciousness of having a field. At the beginning of the second year, seeing him stand thoughtful on the path, "Friend," I said, "do you sow your field this year?"—"Why, likely I might," he answered, "otherwise, than that I have nothing to sow it with—and it would be lost grain, besides—

the ground is not rich enough for corn—in a few years I shall be able to buy manure for it—then you shall see a crop!" and the goodman's eye lightened at the thought of garnerfuls to come. It was during the same summer, that passing through the ground, a scene of unusual activity presented itself —man, wife, and child, all were in the field, and all were busy. "What now, good friend?" I said; "this is no month for sowing corn; and I cannot say your lapful looks like it." Hodge answered— "It is ill sowing corn upon a fallow field—but I am tired of looking at it as it is. Till the time that I can make it useful, I have a mind to make it pretty; and so we are planting it all over with these thistles."—"Thistles!" I exclaimed. "Why, yes," said Hodge, with the look of a man who had solid reasoning on his side—"I was walking the other day, upon the common, thinking, as one may do, upon my fallow field, and how much money I wanted of enough to buy manure for it, when my eye was taken by some tall red flowers, growing in plenty on the waste. They looked very beautiful. The fine broad leaves lay gracefully folded upon the turf; their fringed heads shone in the sunbeams, with colours that might have shamed the rainbow. Thistles are of no use, I know; but then my ground will bear nothing better at present—they will look pretty from the window, and will do no harm for a year or two: so here we are all at work—I have fetched them from the common; seed, roots, and all,

and next summer we shall see."—"Friend," said I, "I have seen many men dig up thistles, but I never thought to see a man planting them."—"But perhaps," said Hodge, with conscious superiority of wit, "you have seen them plant things not half so pretty."—"But your corn, goodman—how is your future crop to grow, if you fill the ground with thistles?"—"Bless your heart!" said Hodge, with a look of contempt, "why, then, to be sure, we can dig them up again—time enough yet—may be you a'nt used to digging." It was vain to resist the goodman's last argument, with all the hidden meanings with which his tone invested it—viz. that I had better mind my own business—that I was talking about what I did not understand—that I never had a field—and that, if I had, I should, *en attendant*, plant it over with thistles—therefore I passed on. So did summer's heat and winter's cold, and blithely the thistles grew. The common never bore a finer crop; and with all my prejudice, I was obliged to own the flowers looked very pretty.

Mean-time the goodman's store increased—the funds were forthcoming—the field was ploughed and sown—the wheat came up, and so did the thistles. A chancery suit could not have ejected them after so long possession. They had all the advantage; for while the wheat was to be sown afresh for each succeeding year, the thistles came up of themselves. Then they were goodly men and tall—they lifted their heads to the sunbeams, and scattered their

seeds in the breezes, while the sickly wheat lay withering in their shade. I did not question my goodman of his crops. Every spring I saw him rooting up thistles, and every summer I saw the thistles blow—and for every one he left, there next year came up twenty. Whether, as years advanced, they became less numerous, or whether he lived to see them exterminated, I cannot say—I have left that part of the country.

Do my readers not believe my story? Is my goodman's folly too impossible? Let them consider a little—for I have seen other labourers than he, who sow a harvest they would be loth to reap, and trust to future years to mend it. Of those who doubt the sanity of my goodman Hodge, many may thoughtlessly be doing the same thing; whether they be parents, whose fondest charge is the education of their children, and their fondest hopes its produce; or whether their one small field be the yet unsettled character of their own youthful mind. In my extensive listenings, I have seen many things that have surprised me only less than the reasonings by which they were defended; but I would rather speak upon the general principle, than particularise in the application of it; except it be some few instances by way of illustration. I believe the application can scarcely, in any case, be equivocal. Every careful mother knows, every reflecting woman knows, what is the moral produce she desires of the mind she has to cultivate—or rather, let me say, every Christian

knows, what are the fruits the absent Lord of the domain expects should be rendered him, by those whom he has left in charge. If these fruits be purity and holiness of heart, simplicity and sobriety of mind, pious consistency of purpose, and a life of determined separation from all that is sinful in the practices of the world, what are we to say of the honesty, or of the competency, of that steward, who, to produce them, sows the seeds of folly, and plants the root of pride, and encourages the growth of earthliness, and cultivates a taste for things forbidden? I have talked or listened to many parents on this subject, during the education of their families. I have seen a father encourage his boys to fight out an amateur battle, for the right of possession to a puppy-dog, and yield it to the victor—and when I asked him if he intended his boys should in after life take possession by force of what they could not prove a right to, he said, "No—but boys must learn courage—it is their nature to fight, and it is good exercise for their limbs—they would know better when they were men." I have seen a mother take her daughters to a dancing-school, to be taught every fashionable manœuvre of the ball-room—and when I asked her if she meant her daughters should be introduced to amusements she did not herself approve, she said, "She hoped not—the principles she laboured to instil would, she trusted, prevent it—but till they were of an age to feel their influence, she must let them do as others do—there was no harm

in children's dancing." I have seen a teacher bring tears and blushes upon the cheek of a pains-taking booby, by showing him the achievements of his brother, assuring him, that while the younger brother was sent to college, he, for his stupidity, must go behind the counter. I asked him if he wished that when that boy became a man, he should be pained by the superiority of others, or ashamed of the station to which Providence assigned him. He answered me, "Nay—but emulation is the finest thing in the world: it is impossible to make any thing of boys without the stimulus of rivalry." I have asked a lady, whose children I saw every evening playing at cards for half-pence, and vehemently contending for success, whether she was bringing them up to be gamesters, or to waste their hours in frivolous pursuits and unwholesome excitations of temper and feeling. Half laughing and half angry, as at a foolish question, she said, "Of course not—but it did not signify how children amused themselves." Of another, who was cramming her children's minds with most precious nonsense, in the form of books, I asked if she meant that they should be weak, ill-judging, and romantic women. She, too, said "No—but children do not understand sensible books—she was glad to get them to read at all, and should give them better books when they were older." A few times in my life, I have seen parents take—no, not take (for they would themselves have been ashamed to be seen there), but send—their children to the theatre,

and other public places, which they had taught them to consider inconsistent with the spiritual requirements of the gospel, and the safe conduct of a corruptible nature through a corrupting world—alleging, that it is desirable, at a certain age, to let young people taste these pleasures, that they may better appreciate the nature and tendency of them.

Let me pause a moment. Of those who are reading this, some will say, "But we do not think there is any harm in public places, in dancing, in boxing, and all these things you talk about." I answer, "That is not the question. What I particularise applies only to those who do think these things objectionable, as leading into sin; and who wish their children should grow up in this opinion. To you these instances may not apply; but, if there is anything in the world you do think wrong or unbecoming in man or woman, suppose that to be the thing I have instanced, and the case will be in point. I meant not to blame any one for planting the root, of which he wishes to gather."

One word to those young persons who are free, or are allowed, in some measure, to judge for themselves—and perhaps a few years more of age, may not make the words inapplicable. What is it you intend to be? A child of God, a purified jewel of the Redeemer's crown, a heavenly plant, bearing seed a hundred fold—walking not after the course of this world in the vanity of your minds, but in meet and holy preparation for the bliss of heaven? Do you

desire to fulfil the purport of your baptismal vow, to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will neither follow nor be led by them—obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life—even as you have pledged yourself to do, in these words, or others of like meaning? These are great fruits—your fallow field is ill disposed to bear them—the air about you is well prepared to blight them. O! why are you so bold? Why do you reason so absurdly, and act so foolishly, as in many cases you are seen to do:—when you insist on going once but to see; you know it is wrong, you do not mean to make a practice of it—when you seek companions and employments you know will dissipate your thoughts and unsettle your habits—when you poison your minds, and stimulate your passions, and heat your imagination, and pervert your taste by every species of pernicious reading and unhallowed talk, by ambitious schemes and unsanctified desires? Would you be persuaded—would those who have the management of others but consider—how hard a thing it is to purify, and make meet for glory, a spirit born in sin, and conceived in iniquity, prone to evil as the sparks fly upward, but to all good unwilling—a soil that bears indigenous every bitter and unwholesome weed, but will only be cultured into

fruitfulness by toil and care, favoured with the dews of heaven, and the sunbeams of celestial grace! We must have had small experience in life, and less in religion, if we do not know the difficulties, the miseries, the conflicting feelings, entailed upon us by the tastes and associations of our past lives—how very difficult it is, with every motive and inclination to the work, to subdue one evil propensity, or root out one ungodly feeling; to correct even one, the smallest sin to which we are habituated—if we may venture to call any thing small which is offensive to the pure vision of the Most High.

We scarcely expect to be understood, to the full extent of our meaning, by any but those who, having come to be like-minded with their Lord, have learned to know no misery equal to the consciousness of sin, no desire so intense as to be holy in his sight, no hatred so deep as towards iniquity, apart from its eternal consequences. But I could wish that the less experienced would take it on the word of those who are before them: for, if honest in religion, they will come to this mind at some time. It is then that the heart becomes conscious of the mischief of every habit, of every inclination, or taste, or feeling, that has been engendered by example, or cultivated by indulgence. Then the tossed and troubled spirit has cause to say, "Why was I encouraged in these feelings, till they have become as natural to me as to think or breathe? Why did I feed my ima-

gination with those images, till I find it impossible to expel them from my mind? Where did I learn this taste for vanities, that seems determined to go with me almost to heaven?" I do not know whether what we hear be all a fiction; or whether those who, at the altar on their knees, declare that the memory of sin is grievous to them, and the burden of it intolerable, have any such sensations as their words express—but if they have, I am sure they cannot thank their parents for having poured one drop unnecessary of bitter memory into that full cup, nor themselves for having voluntarily added one feather's weight to that too heavy burden.

Admit that the thistles may be rooted out—that the girl who is taught vanity, will not be vain when she becomes a Christian woman—and the youth who is encouraged in oppression, rivalry, and pride, will not be contentious or dissatisfied when he becomes a Christian man—still be it remembered, it is no magic touch of the celestial wand that converts the bond-slave of earth into the meet inheritor of heaven. It can do so, we know—but generally, as regards the sanctification of the heart, after it has been pardoned and renewed, the process is a long, and often very painful one. It is by fire the gold is purified. By many a painful excision the eye is made single. Sorrow after sorrow comes—draught after draught of misery is drained—and the heart has sometimes to be buried beneath the wreck of every

thing it has loved and delighted in, before earth and self can be crushed out of it. Why should we be so mad, so unjust to our children, and cruel to ourselves, as to increase the difficulty of the cure, because confident it will in the issue be performed? Why do we plant our ground with thistles, because, after years of labour, they may be rooted out?

No. XXXIII.

THE THREE SABBATHS.

> It was the universal Sabbath,
> ....When the prayer
> Flows from the righteous with intenser love;
> A holier calm succeeds; and sweeter dreams
> Visit the slumbers of the penitent.
>
> SOUTHEY's *Thalaba.*

MR LISTENER,

IN the earlier part of your listening career, you gave us a paper upon the misuse of the Sabbath, in which you adverted with much truth to the weariness, idleness, and impatience which commonly attend its hallowed hours, among those who do not think themselves at liberty openly to profane them, at the same time that the law they submit to, is at best an onerous and painful burden. I doubt not, that to a portion of your readers these things were applicable —I hope they were beneficial. I make no doubt that the newspapers have disappeared, the young ladies' correspondents waited for their letters another day or two, the friends who assembled for gossip stayed at home, and the carriages rested in the stable. All this I am bound to believe, from the

known readiness of all good people to take advice. Whether the clock that went too slowly, now keeps time on Sunday as well as on other days, will depend, I imagine, on stronger influence than yours. But, Mr Listener, there is a portion of your readers to whom that paper did not apply. They love the holy law they have pledged themselves to keep, and desire to use the Sabbath as shall be most acceptable to God, and best serve the purpose of its institution. To themselves and their families they would fain make it lovely that they may love it, and delightful that they may delight in it. On their behalf I address myself to you. Some of us are young and without guide: many advisers come about us: "Come hither and go thither—be at this place in the morning, and at that place in the afternoon, and at the other in the evening—teach that school, help that society, devour these five hundred books at once. It is impossible to want employment on Sunday, when there is so much to be done for the service of God." Others of us, if not young in years, are new to the desires that have taken possession of our hearts. We are as if just awakened to a scene where old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Our children are about us, and our domestics are looking to us for example; yet we scarcely know ourselves what is best and fittest to be done. We only know that we desire to do what is most in conformity with the spirit of God's law. We have looked at your paper; you have only told us what we are

not to do. But it is not sufficient that God's law be not broken. They are not the arbitrary appointments of a ruler who makes laws merely because he is a ruler, and has no object in them but to try the obedience of his subjects. They are established for a purpose. Every law of God has a reason and an object, tending to his glory and his people's good. Tell us how we, especially those of us who are young, or have the young about us, may best fulfil the spirit and purpose of this law—"Ye shall observe my Sabbaths to keep them holy"—Tell us how we may learn to love as well as to keep them.

Many Sabbaths have passed over since I received the above request. I would have complied with it immediately—for it is a subject that my heart delights in—but I am expected, by virtue of my profession, to hear before I speak; and rather to report what others do, than offer the abstract reflections of my own mind. This difficulty has been removed. I was at the time upon an excursive visit among my friends. I believed that all or most of them would consecrate their Sabbaths to the best of their judgment—for all were what is called professors of religion; and I had no reason to doubt but that the laws of God which are on their lips, are written on their hearts to do them. I considered that among these I might witness what my correspondents desired to be told—and I was not deceived in my expectations.

The family in which I passed my first Sabbath from home, were persons long distinguished in the religious world as servants of God, living in his faith, and devoted to his service. Propriety, charity, and love, were the character of this house at all times. During the week I had seen nothing of which I could have said the practice had an unholy and unchristian tendency; and I had heard no mention of things sacred, but in such terms as Christians love to hear. But the days, of course, had been occupied with a variety of things. The younger part of the family were engaged every hour about some matter of education, some healthful exercise, or innocent recreation. The father was abroad upon business of a thousand kinds, and the mother engaged with business of as many kinds at home. Of course, they had all their hours of private recollection, perhaps at daybreak or at midnight; but, as far as could be perceived, the hours of family prayer were the only periods of cessation from secular affairs. Such just importance was attached to the value of time in this house, that to have been idle would have been felt a disgrace to the youngest of its members; and it is much to say that every thing I saw them employed about became their age, and the several duties of their station.

Saturday passed like other days, and I heard no one remark that to-morrow would be Sunday. Perhaps it was not extraordinary that what happens every week should not be remarked upon: but I am so much in the habit of saying to myself, "To-morrow

will be Sunday," I seemed to miss the remark; and no moment occurred in all the day, in which to have said it myself, would not have seemed foreign to the purpose.

When I awaked on the Sunday morning, though the wonted sounds without the house were hushed, the sounds within were just the same as usual—as much brushing, and banging, and dusting, and all the movements that denote business and activity renewed. The people came down the same, and the breakfast passed the same, and nobody said, "It is Sunday." So much like another day did it feel, that to re-assure myself of its being really the holy day, I asked at what time the service began. "O, at eleven o'clock," said Maria, jumping up hastily; "is it time?" And all were off to prepare themselves. They went all to church, and from their manner there, I believe their hearts went with them. They listened with feeling attention to the sermon, and walked home with an air of serious reflection. I had every reason to suppose some of the servants went to church also: though, as the work required of them was plainly as much as on other days, all could not have gone. During the remainder of the morning, I observed the father walking over his grounds, giving orders for to-morrow, and directions for the week-days' work to such of his servants as could be found. I observed the mother doing the same at home; walking into the nursery, and about the school-room; noticing things that, in the bustle of the last week, had

escaped attention, and giving orders about things that, in the bustle of the next week, might escape memory. The children were not at their usual lessons: I believe they had been learning something sacred—of this I am not sure—most likely they did so every day: but now the young ones were playing at their usual games—the floors were strewed as usual with toys, carts, dolls, and cards, and the usual complement of story-books. The elder daughters were in the garden tying up the flowers. There was an air of leisure in the house, certainly, but none of enjoyment or concern, or any particular engagement of the mind. There was a large dinner, as on other days: the dessert was scarcely on the table when some one said it was church time; and such as were inclined arose and went to church: the servants certainly could not. On returning, I observed that those who had not gone were either writing letters, or reading the same books as on Saturday. I do not say they were profane books—they were not; but they were those that usually lay on the table; I believe they were Cowper's Task, the History of the Albigenses, and Buchanan's Memoirs. Our return produced conversation: it was sensible, rational, and occasionally serious, as it was on other days; still nobody said—"It is Sunday."

When the younger people had retired, I asked my friend if she allowed her children the same amusements on Sundays as on other days. She answered me that she did—their amusements were perfectly

innocent. I continued, "And you do not wish to spare your servants' labour on this day?" She replied, "I would not do outrage to their feelings in any thing—I encourage and wish them to go to church—and if they chose to do their work on Saturday, they might—otherwise I do not think it of any consequence."—"Tell me, then," I said, "what it is you mean? I know you would not act against your conscience for any consideration; and I have always supposed your affections are with God. Tell me why you do not keep the Sabbaths He has appointed." She answered, "If I believed He required it, I should keep them certainly; and as to outward respect before men, I do in some sort observe them, because it is an ordinance of our country, and tending to public good. It was a part of the moral law, I know, when men had no better rule to live by. But under the influence of spiritual religion, I endeavour to live soberly and righteously before God every day—I teach my children never to forget, and never to offend Him—I think we are now under a different dispensation, and may enjoy the freedom the gospel gives, without shackling ourselves with ordinances that belonged to a darker and a sadder day."—"Madam," I said, "you will excuse my words—but yours is a strange language. Of course, I am acquainted with all that has been said about the abrogation of the Mosaic law—I do not wish to speak of it at all—for, if it were possible to prove that the law of the two tables passed away with the

dispensation they belonged to, you would not, I think, release yourself from a single obligation that is contained in them. Nay, with the other nine commandments, I am persuaded, you would be very sorry to dispense; and it seems very strange to me that you should desire to be rid of this. Is it so onerous a burden to set apart a day in seven to the peculiar service of God, that I hear you talk of freedom and gospel privilege? I should have thought the privilege was to keep it."

She answered me—"We must take things in the spirit, not in the letter. If I did not serve God on the other six days, it might be very delightful to me to be allowed to serve Him on this: if I was in the habit of forgetting Him, such a memorial would be very necessary; but I hope this is not the case. I desire that every day with me should be 'a Sabbath to the Lord.'"—"My friend will excuse me," I replied, "if I say I think she speaks too proudly. An eternal Sabbath is the promise of Heaven, but it is not the hope of earth. Do you mean me to understand, that during the activity of secular occupation, in which I have seen your whole house engaged, from eight in the morning till eleven at night—for even your labours of benevolence, however high their motive, *are* secular—that your minds have been in no degree pre-occupied and drawn off from God; so as to lose, if not the memory, at least the enjoyment, of his presence? Do you say that your husband in his counting-house, and your children

with their masters, and your servants in the laundry, are as able and as likely to retain a holy and a heavenly spirit, as if they had nothing else to occupy their minds? Are you so dispossessed of that spirit of earthliness which once reigned in you, that it never makes an effort to recover its predominance, taking the advantage of your legitimate occupation with the things of time, to displace the preference of eternity?"

"These occupations are indispensable," my friend replied; "they are duties. Whatever their dangers, since God has placed us in them, he can support us through all, and sanctify them to us. He knows the infirmities of his people, and to what they stand exposed."

"And therefore," I said, "appointed the Sabbath, to strengthen them and recover them from the mischiefs of that exposure—as, after a hard-fought battle, the general orders his legions to repose, and gives balms and ointments for their wounds. Labour was in the curse pronounced on man for sin—that is, the necessity of labouring for the things that perish. And no sooner did mercy, in the Redeemer's name, remit a portion of that curse, than it remitted, too, a portion of the labour—as if it had bidden us return one day in seven to paradise, to forget our banishment in undisturbed enjoyment of our God. Are we so proud as to say we need it not? Are these labours so congenial, that we should desire it not? Is it this permission to for-

get and forego every thing but what our hearts are set upon, that you speak of as a *shackle* from which the children of God are freed?" The entrance of the husband broke off the conversation.

The second Sabbath offered me a different scene. I heard my beautiful Amelia up before her usual time, sorting, and tying up packets of school-books. To breakfast she came, with her bonnet on, and her cloak on her arm—scalded her throat with tea, and said she had not time to eat—she had to hear twenty children their catechism before church time —and quickly she disappeared. We found her again at the church door. Be it enough to say, the service was delightful—the sermon all that it could be to incline the heart to holiness and peace. My sweet Amelia looked pensively happy as we bent our way homeward, till, catching a sight of a clock, "Dear!" cried she, "it is half past one—my scholars will be waiting;"—and before we reached home, she was seated in the hall, surrounded by women and children. I stopped to listen, and found she was teaching them to read and spell. It was nearly three, when seeing them disperse, I begged Amelia to take refreshment, and asked her if reading and spelling were religious instructions. She said, "Not exactly—but when they had learned to read, they could read the Bible." I was just going to say, that was a contingency that hardly seemed to warrant the unnecessary teaching of those things on Sunday, when a tremendous thunder at the door

announced nothing less than a carriage. "On Sunday!" I thought, "and here"—when in came an elderly lady, flushed, and out of breath. "My dear child," she said to Amelia, "don't lose a moment—I'm come for you, and you must go—Mr W. of York, is going to preach at the New-Street Chapel—make haste—it is two miles off—I've got the carriage—I don't use it of a Sunday, but this is too great a treat to lose—I just heard it by chance—there is not a moment to spare."—"O, thank you!" cried Amelia; "how delightful! I was going to the Sunday-school; but for once"—and into the carriage she jumped. "Dearest me!" said the good old grandmother, in the arm-chair from which she was too infirm to move—"that child will kill herself—but there—she's always after good—not a bit of luncheon has she had! Well, times are altered—when I was young, good people went to their parish church, and read their Bible, and thought that was enough."

The dinner was on the table at five o'clock, but Amelia was not returned. We were in progress when she came. "There now," said the old lady, "sit down and speak to me a word if you can—but eat some dinner first—I have not heard the sound of your sweet voice to-day, nor any of the good things you know how to cheer my heart with."—"Dearest grandmamma," said the lovely girl, "I delight to talk to you—but you know what a day Sunday is to me—I never have a moment to sit

down." The clock struck six, and we were ready for church, when there walked in a group of young people, whose errand ran thus—Amelia must go with them to-night to Old Street—there was a Missionary from Nova Scotia—a most interesting young man, not more than three-and-twenty, and had preached two hours and a quarter this morning—he had been among the savages—it would be a most interesting sermon—she must go. Amelia hesitated a moment, but her blue eyes beamed impatience at her own delay—"I should like to go—but I was going to church with grandpapa—he will not like to be left—I do long to go." The old gentleman understood her looks. "There, go, dear, go if you like—I never cross young people in these things. Don't understand it; didn't use to be so in my time. Take care of yourself, that's all." We went to church, and heard a most beautiful finishing to the morning's discourse, which we had not perceived it wanted, but by which we now found it doubly valuable.

Amelia rejoined us after nine o'clock; for the sermon, as she told us exultingly, had been full two hours long. The colour was gone from her cheek, and the brightness from her eye; she threw herself on the sofa, took some tea, but said she was too much tired to eat. In vain she tried to read—in vain the old lady, who had heard nothing, entreated to be told what *she* had heard. Amelia was exhausted beyond any effort to recover herself. "Dear

Amelia," I said to her, as we were going to bed, "have you enjoyed your Sabbath?"—"O yes, I hope so, but I am dead tired."—"Do you feel the better for this day of rest?" She smiled at the word—"Rest I have had none; but I must be the better for all the good I have heard."—"May you not have heard too much?"—"No, that cannot be: is not preaching the nourishment appointed for our souls? It is more needful than the food we eat."—"But there is such a thing as digesting."—"True," she said; "to-day, I have only had time to devour the food, I must digest it to-morrow."—"That is a new system; your powers should be strong. And then you have had no time to yourself all day."—"No, that is the worst of it: but we must not live for ourselves."—"And yet, I think the Sabbath was given us for our own sakes, to rest and refresh our souls."—"From week-day labours—but we should spend it in well-doing, and imparting spiritual good to all who"—"Who need it—and you, then, are not of that number?"—"Indeed, yes: I need every thing; I feel very sad and quite confused—I know I should profit more by being in my chamber, in communion with God; but then"—"But then you are the only person for whose benefit your Sabbath was not intended."

I arrived on the following Saturday at the house of a friend. She apologised for the absence of her daughters all the morning. "Saturday," she said, "is a particular day among us—we feel like school-

boys finishing up their tasks to be ready for a holy-day. We write all necessary letters—if any little matters are in agitation among us, we try to arrange them, to get them off our minds; particularly we try to disencumber our memory of little things, such as orders, promises, &c., that they may not obtrude themselves to-morrow. In short, it is a universal settling day among us. And you would be amused to see how the little ones mimic and burlesque our plan—arranging their toys, giving back what they have of each other's, and settling all differences—you will see them in every corner of the house, collecting what they have left about, and hunting for what is lost—if I want one of them, it is 'O, mamma, you know it is Saturday, and we are so busy.' I never let them see me smile at their odd devices of arrangement, for I love to see them imbibe our habits, before they can share our feelings."

At dinner, I learned that all arrangement was at an end—indeed I could see it; for the house looked as I have seen others look when every thing is put in order for a rout. Fresh flowers were in the chimney, fresh perfumes on the table—work, books, and drawings, all were laid away. I foolishly asked, if company was expected. "Yes," my friend replied, "we shall have company; but not such as will trouble you. We do nothing on Saturday evening but prepare for Sunday. We collect our poor together, to instruct them in religion, and prepare their hearts for Sabbath occupation; and, as far as

we can, remove any little anxieties that may be on their minds, or disputes that may be between them. We give them tea, and while the elders instruct them, it is the privilege of the little ones to sit up half an hour later than usual, to wait upon them—one not lightly prized, I assure you. When this is done, we like to sit down and talk together, or perhaps read together, if anything particularly interesting has come in—but we do not like to have any matters of business brought in; and our girls have made it a forfeit to disarrange their minds by the introduction of any unwelcome subjects—it sometimes causes us a little mirth to determine whether the forfeit has been incurred."

Sunday came. When I appeared, the youngest child ran up to me, and asked if I was sure I was in a good humour. I said, I hoped so.—"Because," she said, "nobody must get up in a bad humour on a Sunday." The parents smiled, but did not check her: I had before remarked the stillness of the house—I believe, literally nothing had been done, but to light the fires, and prepare the breakfast.

The little ones were all present during breakfast, an unusual thing, receiving from mamma the materials of occupation and amusement; pictures of sacred subjects, little Sunday books, and various articles of that sort, made valuable by being never produced except on Sunday. My friend told me, that though they had similar things in the week, she

always had a choice set for Sunday ; a trick that was certain to succeed in making them desired ; and when the set was worn, and the novelty quite exhausted, they passed into the common nursery store, and new ones were provided; by which the Sabbath was a distinguished and desired day : this was all she could do for them while so young. Some little things were given them to learn ; but it was made rather a matter of credit and ambition than necessity, to have plenty of things to repeat at tea-time. After breakfast everybody disappeared till the service-bell rang ; then all were expected to assemble, to go *together* to divine worship. This was a rule; we went to church or chapel; I shall not say which, though I know, because I would not have it supposed this is an important point of my picture—it makes not to the subject. It was the place the parents had selected as best for themselves and their children, and it was not expected any one should know a better.

On our return home, my friend said to me, "You will excuse our leaving you till dinner. It is our rule to separate, and pass the time alone; our servants, who are confined in the week, have leave to walk out. Our doors are closed against all comers. The girls go to their rooms, or to the garden, where they like, but are strictly enjoined to be each one alone. For my own part, charged as I am with the care of such a family, the right to be alone with God, and do nothing but communicate with myself or Him,

is a privilege I cannot forego for anything. I never even read, except a little in my Bible: I read enough on other days. It is so sweet to me to feel I *may* do nothing, after a week of which every hour is employed; it is really the greatest luxury I know. If I could find no thoughts of my own to employ my mind, this morning's service would amply have supplied them. I believe the girls feel the same; but I do not constrain them as to occupation—merely that they should not be in company. We shall meet you at four o'clock to dinner. I hope you will not want any thing, for it is very likely your bell might not be answered: there are folks in the nursery, however."

At four o'clock we met at a dinner entirely cold; and remained together, talking or silent, as we pleased; but no one spoke of yesterday's business, or to-morrow's plans; and what pleased me almost as much, nobody said, "I am going so and so to night—where are you going?" We were all going, *of course*, to our accustomed place of worship. We went; and when we returned, all the children came forth to tea, with hymns, collects, and all sorts of things to say: we each took our share in hearing them. There was abundance of gaiety, and abundance of cake and fruit, to lay by for to-morrow; and I remarked that wine and cakes were sent down for the servants. Then the Sunday books and pictures were surrendered, and in half an hour all was peace again.

The elder party remained together; sacred music

was the proposed amusement; every one who had learned to play, however imperfectly, was to do her part. All sang together for their own pleasure; and those who excelled, sang apart for the pleasure of the rest. Books were on the table if any one liked to read; but not the same that lay there always. Prayers were as usual, and we retired.

Here are three patterns for making a Sunday—my readers can choose between them.

No. XXXIV.

JANET BEVOIR.

La simplicité est une droiture de l'ame qui retranche tout retour inutile sur elle-même et sur ses actions. . . . . On voit beaucoup de gens qui sont sincères sans être simples ; ils ne disent rien qu'ils ne croient vrai ; ils ne veulent passer que pour ce qu'ils sont ; mais ils craignent sans cesse de passer pour ce qu'ils ne sont pas : ils sont toujours à s'étudier euxmêmes, à compasser toutes leurs paroles et toutes leures pensées, et à repasser tout ce qu'ils ont fait dans la crainte d'avoir fait trop ou trop peu. Ces gens-là sont sincères ; mais il ne sont pas simples.

FÉNÉLON.

I BEGIN to feel very much like a pedlar, who goes about the country, delivering at one place the wares he collects at another. Often the ladies ask me for what they want. I tell them I will look out for it where I go, and bring it them—and I always feel obliged by the commission. It is not long since I was asked, "if it is possible to *acquire* Simplicity ?" There is enough in the question to occupy the philosophic mind, and put the quickest reasoner to a pause. For there is an anomaly in the ideas the words convey. To acquire in this sense, implies to study after, to put on—it implies intention, design —and those are not features of Simplicity. And,

again, the want of Simplicity implies something too much already, not a deficiency to be supplied. The pure white web may be dyed of many colours, and when tired of one colour, we may dye it of another—but he is a skilful chemist who brings it white again. Can the learned acquire ignorance? Can the guilty acquire innocence? Can the beautiful flower, that the sun has faded, and the rains have stained, and the worms have gnawed upon, close up its petals and blow again, as fair and spotless as it opened first? It was a deep question. I thought it might be solved by one passage of Scripture; but, mindful of my profession, I said I would inquire, and report what I could learn. I tell a tale of truth—disguised in outward circumstance, but true in all that is essential to the subject. I expect that many a heart, in reading it, will own its truth; and see, in the issue of it, the object of their hopes, if not as yet attained. And let the young attend. The once-stained tissue will discharge its colours easily—the spirit that has dyed itself deeper and deeper in the schemings of selfishness and pride, has a hard task in this backward process.

Janet Bevoir was an only child. The offspring of anxious wishes and long-protracted expectations, she came into the world the most important being of her little sphere. I do not know how an heir-apparent feels, when he first discovers what it is to be a king—but I suppose not much unlike to what Janet felt, when she found herself the single object

of attention to all about her, to whom every thing was devoted, and in whose person every body's happiness was vested. While she slept, the prettiest babe that ever was seen, as many have been besides, unconscious yet of any thing, many were the consultations held between the parents and the maiden aunts, about the education of the little Janet; and, if there was any difference of opinion as to the method, all were agreed that it was time to begin. As early as she was capable of looking out upon her own condition, Janet perceived two parents, three aunts, a governess, and six servants, intently set to see what Miss Janet would do, what Miss Janet would say, what Miss Janet must eat, drink, and wear—in short, the whole business of whose existence was to bring Miss Janet to perfection. She must have been perverse, indeed, if, against such a current of testimony, she had not believed every thing she said and did to be of the utmost importance, and become intently occupied with herself. The pretty creature was far enough from such perversity—with a disposition of more gentleness and timidity than strength, and parts rather brilliant than solid, extreme sensibility was the prominent feature of her character.

Pas trop gouverner, is a lesson statesmen are slow to learn—and so are some besides them. Janet must neither move, think, nor speak unwatched and undirected. She never took a thing from the table but she must lay it down again, and take it up the

other way—she never came into the room, but she was sent out again to come in properly—she never spoke, but her words were reasoned upon, modified, and explained; corrected, if they were wrong, applauded and repeated from mouth to mouth, if they happened to be right. By no means was the little Janet left to suppose it was her family only she was trained to please—she had every reason to think otherwise. When company was expected, the aunts came to see to Janet's dressing—she was charged to mind how she came into the room, how she put the plums into her mouth, what she answered to those who might speak to her, and whom she was to take especial pains to please. And when the company disappeared, how Janet had behaved, and what was thought of her, was all that seemed important to be retraced. Being an attentive and docile child, with a good deal of natural tact, Janet seldom failed to perform her part to the letter of her instructions; but she was not yet seven years old, before it was evident that she was performing always. She never spoke from the impulse of her little heart; but as she thought would be most applauded and approved. She never moved in the careless elasticity of infant spirits, but with a recollection always of being observed. The great evil to poor Janet from all this, was the perpetual concentration of her thoughts upon herself, and upon the effect produced by herself on others; never allowed one moment to forget herself, or feel herself forgotten.

Janet's education was carried through in the same way; and she grew up to be as much interested in her own distinction, as every one was about her. What was at first a simple compliance with the guiding of others, became a settled purpose of her own. The days of womanhood approached, and Janet made ready to produce herself, with as much anxious speculation upon the results, as the doting parents or the maiden aunts. Poor Janet! not easily shall I forget her, as I saw her at eighteen, fitted out for first appearance: the subject, for five years past, of her imagination's dreams; acted over in idea a thousand times, with every probable and possible effect—the subject, too, of many a conversation to which she was a party in her family. How Janet should appear, how Janet would be received, how Janet would *succeed*—for that, I believe, is the term —involved the interest and happiness of all she loved. Might I pause one moment from my subject—might I say one word to parents in that rank of life where only these things exist—might I suppose there is one religious mother, whose heart is still seared and fettered with the habits of fashionable life, to whom the word would reach!—If that which in the secondary classes of society would be considered a disgraceful speculation, and bring ridicule on the mother who should be detected in it, is the peculiar privilege of the higher, surely the heart of innocence need not be made a party to the speculation. If the business of settling a daughter must be planned and carried on

by her parents, surely the simplicity of youthful feeling need not be converted into a system of deliberate design, by teaching a girl from her childhood, that the wreck of all her happiness, the mortification of her parents, if not the loss of their affections, will attend the failure of their expectations. But, perhaps, I had better go on with my story.

Janet was handsome—she might be said to be elegant—but she was decidedly *maniérée*. Her mind was well informed and sensible—but there was an air of intention in every thing she said, that chilled at once the careless flow of conversation; warning every body, as it were, to keep under arms; though of mischievous or unkind intentions, Janet was incapable. Janet was neither forward nor self-confident; nor should I say she thought too highly of herself; but still there was a perpetual looking out for observation; an expectation to be noticed; or, perhaps, a watchful speculation as to who would notice her and who would not, which a good-natured world easily construes into a desire for admiration. Janet's conduct was marked by the most undeviating propriety; she knew how to say precisely the right thing to the right person. I do not know that she ever said what she did not mean; but it was always apparent that she said the thing because she was addressing my Lord B., or because she was answering to Mrs D., or because she remembered herself to be Janet Bevoir, and not because her heart at the moment suggested the words. In short, the opinion

generally given of Janet in society, was, that she was a pretty, genteel girl, and rather clever; but she thought too much of herself, and had no heart. Had this been true, poor Janet had been happier than she was. She had feelings of more than common sensibility; but, the simplicity of her heart destroyed, its susceptibility remained only as a torment to itself, within reach of every body and every thing to wound. Hitherto her sensibility had cost her nothing: because she was loved and cherished by all with whom she was in contact. If any thing in her was disapproved, it was told her kindly, and she was instructed to do better—if she was approved, applause and caresses assured her of it. But now, poor girl, she was to be criticised before she was loved, and to be judged without being brought into court. Had Janet been simple-minded, she would have been contented to do right, and have taken it for granted she should be approved; she would have followed the dictates of good sense and good breeding, without thinking upon the effect she produced on others: in short, she would have enjoyed society, and contributed to its enjoyments, without thinking of herself at all. As it was, Janet acted in imagination all her appearances beforehand: and when she returned to her chamber, tormented herself with conjectures how she had acted. Had she talked too much? had she talked too little?—ought she to have said this? ought she not to have said that? This person seemed distant to her—had she given any

offence? That person looked at her and laughed—had she seemed ridiculous? Janet would call to mind every word she had said herself, to consider its value over again; and every word any body had said to her, to sift its possible meanings to the bottom; and her heart suffered a thousand mortifications, and received a thousand wounds nobody had intended to inflict.

What began in guiltless self-torment, a few years of the seething influence of society converted into vice. Janet became tenacious, jealous, suspicious. Always *meaning* something herself, she learned to suppose every one else *meant* something; and was ever upon the look-out for affronts and neglects. Losing amid the hard judgments of the world the confidence she had felt in the bosom of affection, without losing the consciousness of observation or the desire of success, her natural timidity prevailed, and she became restless, embarrassed, and reserved. Her eye perpetually on herself, she could not look upon another without making comparisons; and thence she became jealous and disposed to envy.

Alas! poor Janet! a rugged and thorny way to her was the path of fashionable prosperity. I did not see her again for ten years. I know not what befell her in the interval, but I will describe her as I found her then. She had become what we call a religious woman—that is to say, she had given up the habits and amusements of fashionable life, and devoted herself to serious and religious pursuits. I

am inclined to think the principle of piety really existed in her bosom—but there was no simplicity in her heart. Janet was acting still, though in a different character, and before a different audience. I do not say that she was deceitful, or a hypocrite—she had not been that at any time—but there was the same desire for effect, the same calculation on other people's opinion of her, the same consciousness of observation, the same perpetual reverting upon her own words and deeds—not simply as they appeared before God—that had been good—but as to the impression they had made on others. The effect of this want of simplicity on her actions was, to produce a great deal of instability; changing her purposes and opinions, as one motive or another, one design or another, happened to predominate; wanting the simple one of love and obedience to God. It led her into all sorts of undertakings, without regard to her capacity and fitness for them, and bitter mortification when she failed. It led her to fantastic peculiarities of dress and manner at one time, and to sinful compliance with fashion at another; to produce what she thought a good effect, it is true—but still an effect. She went to certain places, that it might be said she was there. She was the devoted disciple of every new preacher till his popularity was past, or there came a newer; and then she was converted and enlightened over again. On her feelings the effect was as intensely miserable, as the subjects of them had become im-

portant. Professing to trust the Saviour for every thing, her eye was turned from Him to perpetual contemplation of herself. Professing to take His faith for her lamp, and His word for her way-mark, she was perpetually measuring herself by the measure of those about her, and moulding her opinions anew, to meet the predominant party in which she stood distinguished—for good, ever for good—but still distinguished. Confusion in her belief, confusion in her motives, confusion in her perceptions of right, was the necessary consequence. Looking ever on herself, changeful, faltering, faithless, instead of on that God who changes not, Janet was at one time elated by ill-grounded hopes, at another depressed by fears no better grounded. The approbation of the pious bore her in imagination to the very gates of heaven—their slights and surmises left her hopeless at the gates of hell—forgetful that they judged, in either case, by the exterior only; while He who saw the heart was to be her only judge. In short, poor Janet was honest enough to perceive her motives were not single in any thing; she never could be sure, whether love to God, to man, or to herself, was the predominant one; and therefore she never could be happy. It is almost needless to say, her manner and conversation were as little simple as her heart. The phraseology of a prevailing party, the conventional talk of a sect, uttered without seeming to issue from any correspondent emotion—opinions forced into notice with-

out any suggestion from the occasion — this was the character of Janet's conversation: questions she could as well have answered as asked — doubts that had never really troubled her—hopes and fears to which she was an utter stranger, but all which it was of course to talk about in religious society. Out of it, Janet's timidity prevailed: she was afraid of ridicule, afraid of censure, afraid to speak at all, or to speak as she believed—what would be thought of her, was ever uppermost.

Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiop his skin? Can the simplicity of the unconscious child be restored to the bosom seven times dyed in artifice and pride? Can the practised heart unlearn its doubleness, and become single? Ten years later, I saw Janet Bevoir again. Much had happened in that time. A reverse of fortune had deprived her of the means of distinction. Some extravagances of doctrine, and palpable inconsistencies of conduct, had brought her religion into doubt, in the circle on whose opinions she had lived. Sickness—painful, lingering sickness—had sent her to her chamber to commune with her own heart in solitude and silence. There Janet could not act—there Janet had no audience but her God. There, for the first time in her life, Janet found herself unobserved and forgotten; and for many a long month had nothing to do but to unclothe herself of the subterfuges of sin, and the disguises of self, and stand unmasked and single before herself, as she stood before God—an

infant, guileless, helpless, naked. And there she first forgot that she was Janet Bevoir — the expected, distinguished, disappointed Janet Bevoir: and saw in herself nothing but a reconciled child of God—the purchase of the Redeemer's blood, bought with a price, and her own no longer. When I saw her, she had recovered, and returned to society. But how altered! Janet was simple now in every thing, because her heart was simple. It was filled with one thought, one hope, one love—or, if there were any other, they were merged in this, as the stars of heaven in the morning sunbeam. It was impelled by one motive, guided by one law, and animated by one reward. Janet saw too intently now the eye of God upon her, to consider who else observed her. Janet was too busy in approving herself honest before God, to hear what others said, or inquire what others thought. Her eye was upon herself, indeed, but it was upon that secret self that none can see besides. And now Janet's manners were simple, and her words were simple—they could not be otherwise—she meant no effect, and looked out for none—she had no intention but to do right and to speak truth—it did not signify who heard it, or who saw it. Janet had one Judge, one King, one Father. She saw herself worse than any eye beheld her, she saw herself greater than earth could make her. She lost her timidity in the discovery of the world's worthlessness, and her pretension in the discovery of her own. She forgot that she was

Janet Bevoir, for she had learned that she was nothing.

My story has been too long : I can add but a few words more. Would any acquire simplicity of character? Let them not set about to put it on—that is but to stain again the thrice-dyed web, and add a new affectation to the old ones. Let them go to the source whence conduct and conversation spring. Let them see if they worship one God or more. Instead of watching their words and actions, let them watch their hearts, and see if they act and speak to please their God, the world, or themselves, or each alternately. Let them walk with their eye on heaven, and they will walk gracefully, without thinking of their carriage. Let the heart be made single, and Simplicity will grow upon their thoughts and feelings first, and ultimately upon their manner and conversation. This has been, and it can be; for it is what the Scripture means, when it directs us to become as little children.

No. XXXV.

HESTER EDEN.

Vivre en soi ce n'est rien; il faut vivre en autrui.
A qui puis-je être utile, agréable aujourd'hui?
Voilà chaque matin ce qu'il faudroit se dire;
Et le soir, quand des cieux la clarté se retire,
Heureux à qui son cœur tout bas a répondu:
Ce jour qui va finir, je ne l'ais pas perdu;
Grâce à mes soins, j'ai vu, sur une face humaine,
La trace d'un plaisir ou l'oubli d'une peine!
Que la societé porterait de doux fruits,
Si par de teles pensées nous étions tous conduits!

Wanting the key of revelation, and utterly at fault without it, philosophy has argued, whether man has any innate knowledge of right and wrong: or whether, indeed, there be any right or wrong, apart from the expediency or inexpediency, proved by experience to pertain to certain actions and propensities. If philosophy had no ground for these conclusions, it had, at least, some excuse for its doubts, in the confusion of opinion respecting good and evil, which has been found wherever the light of revelation shines not. There is no crime so base and abominable, but has been somewhere held a grace, if not a virtue, in the character: and men have been deified and adored

in one place, for actions for which in another they might be hanged. The revelation of the law of God, wherever it is acknowledged, puts an end to this discrepancy. Professedly it is adopted as the test of morality; and legislation recognises it as the standard of right and wrong; not in the spirit indeed, but in the letter. If men still continue to commit outward and gross crimes, they do it, admitting them to be such; or they endeavour to pass them under other and fictitious names.

But is there no confusion between right and wrong?—no discrepancy of opinion in Christian societies respecting the character of certain actions, habits, and feelings? Is there nothing that is a sin in one place, a harmless folly in another, and in a third, a fashionable accomplishment—the pride of one bosom, the shame of another? Have we but one name for a thing, whatever dress it wears; and that the name which God has given it? Is there nothing which the partition-wall of our houses divides into vice on one side, and virtue on the other? Nay, closer than this, is there in the same chamber nothing that one will blush to have, and another would blush to be without? Nay, closer still than this, is there no feeling, no disposition, we have felt ashamed in one company to be detected in, and ashamed in another to be supposed to want? If there be any such thing, it is a remnant of heathen darkness, which the light of truth divine has failed to dissipate —not for want of pureness in its beams, but because

we have not examined our opinions by its lamp, or minded its testimony of what man misnames. How much of this confusion between right and wrong has our Saviour unravelled and exposed in his Sermon on the Mount! How vainly, for the most part, unravelled and exposed what man desires not to know! To those who do desire to know the wrong that they may shun it, the right that they may seek it, I will tell what gave rise to these observations.

In my course of listening, now of many years' length, my attention has been taken with something of which I found it very difficult to trace the name. Its characters still more baffled and defeated my inquiries, while the place of its abode, and the modes of its appearing, have been so incongruous and contradictory, I could not determine to what or to whom this indefinite something most properly belongs. I might have taken it for a misfortune, but that I observed its dwelling was with the prosperous. I might have taken it for disease, but that I found it with the young and healthful. I might have taken it for a sin, but that I heard it avow itself boldly, where I believed that sin was dreaded. It seems it has no English name; and, meaning no riddle, I should have called it by its foreign one at once, but that I have found the feeling existed where it would disclaim its more fashionable appellation. By name, however, or by feature, or by what means soever, I have endeavoured to detect this thing, that in its genuine character I may present it to my readers,

and bid them judge if it be friend or foe, a Christian virtue, or an unsuspected vice.

I have a young friend, but just become a woman, who is perpetually complaining of *Ennui*. She is *ennuyée* in wet weather, hot weather, and cold weather. She is *ennuyée* in the country with too little company, and *ennuyée* in London with too much. She goes out, because she is *ennuyée* at home; and comes home dissatisfied, because she was *ennuyée* out. She finds some people *ennuyants*, because they talk so much; and others *ennuyants*, because they are too silent. I never put a book into her hand, though she thinks herself fond of reading, but after getting half through the first chapter, she fluttered the leaves, looked at the binding, and declared it quite *ennuyant*, or something synonymous, if not in the exact terms. I never asked her to read the most exquisite passage of poetry, or the most exalted expression of feeling, but she stopped three or four words short of the end, to express something of a similar opinion. I have heard her many times express a distaste for life, and almost a desire to be rid of it; from a feeling, which, though she gave it not the name, I could perceive, by her description of it, to be this same *Ennui*. Where could I better choose to study it? to trace its characters, to detect its origin, and, if it might be, to expose its consequences? Was it disease? Was it misfortune? Was it sin? Was it any thing, or but a modish expression, used from habit, and without a meaning? I deter-

mined to know. I had ample opportunities, and I resolved to search the secret to the bottom. I tell what I discovered, in hope that those who are conscious of the feeling, whether accustomed to use the word or not, will make the like search within themselves, to find if it originates in a source as evil.

Misfortune? Hester Eden never knew one. Sorrow never chilled her bosom. Death never widowed her affections. She had never parted from a thing she loved, nor foregone a blessing she enjoyed. Injustice had not robbed, unkindness had not wounded, falsehood had not wronged her. She was not old enough in life to know its difficulties, or feel the blightings of its disappointments. All her portion of it yet, had been domestic affection, the indulgence of genteel life, and the advantages of polite education, unearned, and unembittered. Disease? Hester Eden was a finely-formed, lively, healthy girl—pain had never racked her limbs, nor sickness dimmed her eyes, nor watchfulness chased her slumbers. Was it any thing? Could that be nothing, which often made existence a weariness to herself; and herself, not seldom, a weariness to those about her; with every thing a bountiful Providence could give her to enjoy; and with powers to please, to enliven, and to bless? There is but one thing else—we shall see.

I observed Hester at home, where she had no society but her own family. It was large and affectionate; but Hester had no particular object of interest in it. Her brothers and sisters were younger

than herself—they could teach *her* nothing—they could do nothing to amuse *her*—*she* could not gain any thing by their society; and, therefore, without exactly wanting affection, she found little interest in being among them. She had parents, the kindest and the best, but their attention was occupied in their business, or their family, or the pursuits that became them—this did not interest *her*—it was not *her* business—and with them, too, she was *ennuyée.* Hester had horses: and so long as she was riding, she was all life and spirits, and enjoyment—but, unfortunately, she could not ride on for ever—and back, at the dismounting, came the *ennui.* Hester had a garden—and so long as there were flowers to train, and sun to shine upon them, she was active, and amused—but it sometimes rained, or flowers were no more—and back again came the *ennui.* Hester could draw—I saw her sometimes set about it—begin half-a-dozen things, loiter over them an hour or two, and put them unfinished in the fire. I asked why? She only drew to amuse *herself*, because she did not know what else to do—they were of no use to her, she never meant to finish them. She was *ennuyée* at the sight of them. Hester had books—that is to say, there were books to be had. If it was a fashionable book that she might talk about in company, or an exciting story that might stimulate her passions, or even a scientific work that she was ashamed not to have read, Hester got through it. But though she fancied she liked reading, it was

clear that, for its own sake, she did not like reading, or care for knowledge. She never liked a book unless she had a secondary motive for doing so, more immediately connected with *herself*. For the rest, she lolled on her chair, turned over the leaves, and the subject might comprise the interest of a world, it was nothing to *her*—*she* should never have occasion to know it, or talk about it,—therefore, it was dry and stupid, and altogether *ennuyant*. Hester could work: but of what use to *her* to work, unless it was something she particularly wanted—it was very *ennuyant* to work what she did not care for. Hester could sing—and Hester could talk—and in company, Hester did at times both sing and talk—but at home, it was not worth while—it was no amusement to her, whatever it might have been to those about her—of course, too *ennuyant* to be worth the pains.

I observed Hester in society, where, it may be supposed, from what I have said, she would find sufficient zest to keep off the enemy. Not at all. So long as any body could amuse Hester by immediate attention to *herself*, and ply her with conversation about things that concerned *her own* immediate feelings, objects, and occupations—or so long as, with the exercise of her talents, wit, and knowledge, she could amuse herself by amusing those she thought it worth while to please, Hester was the most animated, vivacious, happy being of the company: but let the conversation, however interesting, be carried

on by others, without regarding her—let the subjects, though of deepest moment, be such as did not personally affect her—or in an opposite case, let her find herself capable of giving pleasure to others, but from their inferiority, real or imaginary, not likely to receive any in return—and Hester is seized with a direr fit of *ennui* than ever found her in the country in a shower of rain. In short, when under the excitement of selfish gratification, Hester Eden was a most active, animated, humorous, and agreeable woman—when without it, she was indolent, lounging, careless, and wearisome—in her own word, the most *ennuyante* person I ever met with. With every possible means of happiness, she enjoyed but little; because, as she herself explained it to me, so few things interested her, or seemed an object worthy of pursuit.

What young lady, or what number of young ladies, shall I offend, if I venture to unravel this mystery—to call Hester's enemy by its right name, to show why so few things interested her, and why life afforded no object of sufficient value to be worth pursuing? I am in hopes that nobody will take the entire character to themselves; but only certain parts and portions of it, with various palliatives and alternatives, that will lessen the effect of my disclosure. They will convict themselves of *ennui* only once a-week, or once a-month, or when it rains for three days together; and thus be less unwilling to believe the extent of an evil they have not extensively suffered.

Hester lived only for herself. Had she honestly watched the movements of her heart from the time she awoke in the morning, till she closed her eyes at night, she would have found there was not a thought, a feeling, a pleasure, a desire, of which self was not the ultimate object. Had she examined her actions, she would have found they began in self, and issued in self—her own gratification, her own advantage, her own adornment, her own success, thoughtfully or thoughtlessly, had been exclusively pursued. Not a living being was made happier by what Hester did, or comforted in sorrow by what Hester said. Had she never come into the world, nobody would have come short of any good they had —had she gone out of it, nobody would have lost anything; except her parents, who loved her as their affection's charge, and not for any service she had rendered them. Her brothers and sisters would have mourned her, from affection, too—but even to them she could not be said to be of use: she never found her pleasure in improving, or in pleasing them. I do not say Hester wronged any one, or injured any one—but I say her only business in existence was herself. She had no pleasure in other people's talents—she found no excitement in other people's interests—she enjoyed no other one's happiness, and shared no other one's sorrows.

If I have said enough to prove that Hester's *ennui* was the offspring of selfishness, I have not yet said all. The Self to which she was devoted, was

that base, grovelling, perishable portion of herself, which belongs exclusively to time. What was the object of her creation, for what purpose her years were given, her powers and faculties designed, and what was to be the ultimate issue of the whole, was not an object of consideration, much less of action or pursuit. What wonder if Hester found no sufficient interest in existence, no remedy for the listless void of disoccupied powers and feelings! No wonder Hester was *ennuyée*. The purpose of existence and its end cut off, all co-existent beings shut out by the narrow line her selfishness had drawn around her, what a pitiful compass was there left, in which all the powers of mind and feeling were to spend and sate themselves!

I leave the story. There are few, I hope, so unhappy as Hester Eden. Most have multiplied themselves into one or two, or it may be a dozen beings, whom family connexion, or intimate friendship, has identified with themselves, and thus made objects of existence. If these are enough, and while they remain, there is less liability to the feeling we speak of. But let the still small circumference be voided —let something interfere to deaden the interest, or remove the excitement, and see how quickly it will come. Listen for a while. Do the lonely not tell you their hours are a burden to them? Do the bereaved not tell you they have nothing left to live for? Do the disappointed not tell you they have no object of interest remaining? Let the selfish and

the worldly keep their language. Let those who have been fed upon sensation, famish in despair when the world ceases to supply it. But never let us hear words like these from Christian lips, for it does not become them. The purpose for which being was given of God, must be sufficient to employ that being—if it prove not so, it is because God's purpose and ours are not one. The continuance of being to the child of God, has a purpose also, else would he be taken to his rest: the day's work, for the finishing of which he is detained, must be sufficient for the day's employ—if it is not, it is because we do not choose to do it. Therefore, if it be true that any one has no object of sufficient interest in life, it can only be because they have relinquished the great objects for which they ought to live—the glory of God, the good of their fellow-creatures, and their own preparation for glory; and betaken themselves to one that is indeed not worth their trouble—the selfish interest of sixty uncertain years. Every talent, every faculty, and every moment of time we are possessed of, was given us for a definite and destined purpose; and it is only because we have embezzled the intrusted wealth, and devoted it to Self, that we are subject to this want of interest, and insufficiency of motive.

I am not speaking of that langour of disease, the result of physical depression, which makes the hours pass heavily, from incapacity of action. This is quite a different feeling. The suffering then is, that we

cannot act; not that we want a stimulus to action, or an object of pursuit. It is a privation of powers we feel the want of, not the burden of powers we know not how to expend—the case of the *Ennuyée*. Examine the complaint from the lips of prosperity: what does it mean, but that God has given so much, there is nothing to go after for ourselves: and to heighten the enjoyments, to lessen the sufferings, to aid the incapacity, and supply the deficiencies of others, are not objects of sufficient importance to keep our activities alive? Listen to it in the language of adversity: what does it mean, but that, having selected some object of existence for ourselves, which God has thought proper to withdraw, we determine, in rebelliousness of heart, to seek no other, but to lose, in cold inaction, the powers he has not suffered us to dispose of as we please?

Shall I err, then, if I say, that this feeling, which, wanting a better word, we call *Ennui*, though often betrayed and complained of where the word is not applied, has no other source than that principle of Self, which, in man's corruption, takes place of the principle of righteousness? If this be true, when Divine grace displaces the selfish principle, its offspring, too, should disappear. And again I say, neither the word nor the thing becomes one who has been hired and sent into his master's vineyard, at the first hour or the last, to perform the task assigned him.

No. XXXVI.

ALMS-GIVING.

La générosité d'argent est facile ; il n'y a que d'être riche pour en avoir . . . . .C'est une belle chose qu'un homme vraiment généreux, car il n'y a de grandeur sur la terre que dans le sacrifice de soi.

De Staël.

Madam,

Having frequently been much indebted to your "Listener" for little rubs to my conscience, as well as for light thrown on the obscurity of my views in many respects, I feel assured you will pardon the liberty I take in requesting, that, in the next convenient leisure, you will devote some of your pages to the feelings and conduct proper to be observed towards that wretched and troublesome race—the Beggars. In giving you a hasty sketch of my own difficulties respecting them, I merely intend to draw forth your comments and advice ; and having of late given up the fatiguing desire of *every one's* opinion, and *every one's* example, shall abide by your decision, and be much comforted by a well-proved rule, whether to follow the new plan of relieving the beggars, by giving them nothing, or of strictly acting up to

the text, " Turn not away thy face from any poor man."

For many years I lived in the country; and here, after much capricious conduct towards the race, relieving or turning off every fresh comer according to the fancied truth or imposture of his predecessor, or to the varying advice of every friend consulted, I at length camo to a determination, that *for myself* it was safer to be weak and mistaken, than to hug myself in selfishness, and call it "prudence;" and therefore gave orders that no poor creature should be turned away from a house where every comfort was enjoyed by its inmates; but receive enough in wholesome food to prevent their suffering, during that day, the misery of want, and rebellious cursing of the heart towards those whose lot was made so much to differ from their own. Well, I entertained (to speak truth) about the average proportion of one honest man to forty knaves; when leaning, one evening, in a musing fit, over the entrance-gate of my little domain, my eye was caught by some large chalk characters on the outside of the gate; and quitting my station, I read, with some difficulty, " God bless the family in that house; for I was hungry, and they gave me to eat—thirsty, and they gave me to drink." My heart swelled as I finished this tribute of gratitude, and " never will I forfeit my claim to the prayer of the poor and destitute," was my fervent ejaculation, as I stood gazing on the ill-formed characters, and then watched every object that appeared on the

road till night closed in—hoping, for the first time in my life, to discover a beggar. The orderly habits of my gardener soon led to the disappearance of these written thanks on the gate ; but they were stamped on my heart, and after this occurrence, as you may suppose, my zeal increased. I turned into a sort of caravansera an outhouse near the road, conveniently situated for resting the weary traveller on his way, as well as for facilitating the disappearance of poultry, wood, garden tools, half-dried linen, and all those miscellaneous valuables generally dispersed about the offices and courts of a country residence.

I read no more effusions, and I would rather not (unless much pressed) tell how much I lost in the course of a year—how the race of beggars multiplied—how the poor labourers around me either joined the motley crew, or loudly murmured against me—and how every rich neighbour eased himself of importunity by directing the suppliant to my house; but I will confess to have been greatly relieved when I found myself freed from the difficult task of a reform, by the obligation, from family reasons, of breaking up my country establishment, and coming to reside in London ; where no one knows another's doing—where there are no neighbours—no tenants —no obligations—where the beggars dare not knock at your door, ring at your bell, or peep in at your windows—and I arrived at my new house in ——— street, breathing freely and securely—compromising willingly with smoke, cries, and organs, to live clear

of the beggars, &c. My comfort was put beyond all possibility of molestation by a visit I paid, the very day after my arrival, to a friend, well known in the benevolent and religious world—where, having begun to impart my above-mentioned feelings, he vehemently interrupted me with, "I trust you never give to beggars! it is only doing them harm—undoing all that we have been labouring to achieve. My dear Sir, we have a new plan now which answers entirely. You have, of course, heard of my pamphlet—unanswerable!—here is fortunately a copy left—here are some mendicity reports—Mr ———'s reply to my pamphlet—my rejoinder—and a few tickets, which you may find useful."

My friend was summoned to a committee, and with my hands completely full, and my head completely puzzled, I left his door—my diseased vision (which now sees beggars as the Opium-Eater did crocodiles—in every thing) beheld me instantly surrounded by my foes; and fortunately remembering my way, I fairly ran home, being stopped only twice—once by a sweeper, whose services were irresistible—once by a lady, who restored me a pamphlet. I gave them each a ticket "for soup and labour;" and when arrived at home, shut myself up for a week, until I had, by dint of "Reports," "Hints," and "Cautions," mastered the subject, and could walk forth in the streets with all the courage with which one visits Exeter 'Change; for I had barricadoed out the beggars with answers for every species of demand; and

it is well I had done so—since never was man so followed by unconquerable women—men in bowls, on skewers, pleading dogs, and deformed children—respectable people turned beggars when I approached, and boys offered me "matches" in the dogdays; but I was crammed with knowledge—strong in my arguments, and re-echoed firmly the cry of, "I never give to beggars."

It was one bitter evening in October, that, followed by a half-naked wretch from street to street, and feeling my resolution failing me, I turned abruptly round, and repeating, "I never give in the streets;"—"Then where do you give, sir?" cried the famishing wretch eagerly—"I do not care how far I go."

I had just reached my own door, and in I hurried—very far from conviction of having done right, with the countenance and figure of the rejected suppliant haunting my mental vision, while her question rang in my ears. "Where then do you give?" might be asked of many who might find it difficult to reply in strict truth—and for those who, with myself, could urge, "We subscribe to the various societies for relieving the wants of the poor—we give to any case of well-authenticated distress—we must keep our limited means for those who deserve assistance"—might not this be pleaded, that cases will arise when no rule, no plan, should be suffered to stifle the natural feeling? and it does appear to me the obvious duty of doing good to all men. There might have been "societies" and "associations" at

the time when the poor Jew fell among thieves; and as the wounded man lay helpless by the roadside, the priest might have reflected, as he passed by, that his name stood recorded as a benefactor to mankind, therefore he was such—that his exertions were exemplary, his charities regulated and unalterable; and the Levite might have required proof of the man's character—might have doubted, as "he looked on him," the reality of his distress—above all, having made it a rule never to assist any one on the high-road, his conscience enables him also to "pass by on the other side." It will be a happy world where no prudence is required—where no counterfeits of that really valuable quality can be admitted; but, in the mean time, as the true gem must be ascertained and preserved in this nether world, and feeling that it has baffled my research, like a true philosopher's stone, I resign to you, Madam, the labour of further investigation; and remain, with every sentiment of respect,

Your obedient servant,

DUBIETAS.

"Occupy till I come," is the commission by which every one holds whatever of earthly possession is in his hands. He may have burnt the writings, and forgotten the terms on which he received the property—but that will not alter the case—they will be re-produced hereafter, and judgment entered according to the terms of this commission. It is hence

impossible to form a right judgment of the use to be made of the possession, either generally, or in any particular, without reference to this first transfer of it, from Him whose it was, to him whose otherwise it had never been, and by whom it must be restored "in the day of his returning." This my benevolent and lively correspondent seems scarcely enough to have considered. When he found himself in the country, with house, and lands, and money, and time, an understanding mind, and, as I think, a pious heart, as he leaned over his outer gate, had he reasoned thus—"My absent Lord has left me this in charge. It is not my earning or deserving. Why do I have it? What am I to do with it? He will be here anon, and I must give account"—his first step would have been to examine the Scriptures, as to the will of God in the use of property, as far as by precept or example it has been communicated. There he would have found, that he was to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction—to bind up the broken-hearted—to do good, and to distribute—to feed, to clothe, to comfort—whilst he had time, to do good unto all men, but chiefly to the household of faith. He would have learned, by the whole tenor of the divine law, and especially by the example of the absent Lord, whose property he was for a season trusted with, that he was to do as much good to humanity, and win as much glory to God, as was compatible with the measure of his trust, and the time for which he might retain it. And he would

have perceived that *good, doing good,* must mean with him, what it means with the Master who left him thus commissioned. This would have brought the question of indiscriminate alms-giving into a very narrow compass. It would not be, whether it were better for the poor, or better for himself, to give or not to give ; but whether this was the best and utmost use to be made of the property he had to spare, God's will according.

Wanting this guide, unable to determine what is best for "the beggars," my friend has recourse to doing what is best "for himself ;" and, fearing lest by refusing alms he should indulge his "selfishness," and mistake it for "prudence," he gives, or orders to be given, no matter how, or to whom, his money, the thing he least values ; and reserves to himself his time, his thought, his care, his understanding mind and pious heart, and never misgives that he thus indulges "selfishness," and calls it "benevolence." And he takes for reward and encouragement, a blessing on his garden wall, which he calls the prayer of the poor and destitute. We have heard before of buying prayers with pence. Woe to the heart that would not beat with joy, while the lips of the afflicted ask Heaven for a blessing on the hand through which its bounties come—that would not hold for nought the applauses of a world, at the moment when the last breath of piety asks Jesus to reward their cares! But the prayer of vice, of carelessness, and ignorance —of lips profane, and breath unhallowed—uttered

without thought, and addressed to One they regard not—are those things heard in Heaven? "Verily they have their reward." It is gratifying to the feelings of humanity, and repays the exercise of humanity, but it ascends no farther.

Mean-time, how stands the reckoning with his Lord? What my gentle correspondent could have spared of all the talents he had, is not for me to say; of what he did spare, a summary may be made. All that was given in form of food or money—all that was charged by his servants on the charitable fund, consumed in benevolence of their own—all that was stolen from poultry-yard, out-house, or drying-ground—so much at least his benevolence found to spare. How much good had he done with it? How much misery had he lessened? How much happiness had he communicated? He does not know. Will that answer do? Perhaps he has afforded a day's enjoyment, and a night's repose, to some who will be encouraged by it to spend a year in idleness and vagrancy, and rear their children to the same. He has given to some a premium for iniquity, that will bring them to destruction. To some honest men he may have spared one day of suffering out of their threescore years and ten. To a few, it is possible, he may even have deferred the hour of starvation and death by many days and weeks. It can scarcely be calculated, that he has permanently amended the condition, or augmented the happiness, of any individual among them. This is what he has done. But

what has he left undone? Where is the honest labourer, whom, with the sacrifice of a little leisure, he might have found upon the bed of pain, and by timely administration, saved to be the father and the husband still? Where are the orphans, whom with some little of his influence, and understanding, and trouble, added to the money he could spare, he might have saved from ignorance and infamy? Where are the children of vice, whose confidence he might have won by well-timed pity, and gained access for his piety to touch their hearts? Where are the children of God, his brethren and companions in eternity, pining uncomforted, except of Heaven, in whose chamber he would have been welcomed as a messenger of love, and have heard a prayer, that might indeed have been his meet reward? All this was done before the alms-giving began. What, *all?* Not one left any where within his reach? Did he inquire, did he go and see? Admit that his money did more good than harm, did it the most it might have done?

What moral or physical disability might be upon my friend, to go after the suffering that came not to his door, since he has not told me, I am not obliged to know—But this I know. Money is not the only thing that is not his own—time, and thought, and knowledge, and power, moral influence and spiritual advantage—all must be answered for, for all are God's. I will give my friend, however, the utmost advantage of this plea. I will suppose him planted

in Grosvenor Square, with an utter incapability, from some cause I would rather not undertake to explain, of seeing, hearing, knowing, finding, or imagining, any misery but what presents itself to his charitable vision in the streets—which, indeed, appears to be his actual condition. What better could occur in such an emergency, than that one should come to his imprisoned humanity, and say, "There are those at hand whose hearts are warmed with pity; the haunts of vice are not fearful to them; the filth of poverty does not disgust them; the infection of disease cannot prevent them—they have time, they have understanding, and they are determined to give tribute of all that they possess—but they have not money. What they can spare is not enough to answer the demand. Give them of your ten talents, and in pity for your helplessness they will go and earn usury for you against your Lord's return." These are the Societies of which my correspondent speaks. If every individual could or would do all that is due from him to suffering humanity, there would be no need of Societies; but they cannot, or they will not. Thousands, like my unfortunate friend, cannot perceive misery till it molests them, or feel pity till they are asked for it. If they do, their incarcerated benevolence consumes their very vitals, till the prospectus of a Society sets it free. The guineas are paid, and the conscience returns to its repose. Dubietas, with reason, asks if these have done enough? Yes, if they can do no more—if this is all the money

they can dispense, and money is the only thing they have at their disposal. If not, whatever else they have, is yet to answer for. Be it supposed we give also to every well-authenticated distress. If we have not yet reached the limit of our means, there are more distresses that might be authenticated. There is many a garret, many a cellar, ay, and many a respectable hiding-place of silent penury, where the misery needs but be looked upon to authenticate itself. "O! but we cannot go." Are we sure we cannot? And cannot we send either? Is it come to this, that we must take the chance of feeding the full, and bribing the impostor, by indiscriminate alms, while harmless indigence lies starving, to avoid the alternative of "giving nowhere?" Have a care, lest the most subtle selfishness be hid beneath this subterfuge of pity. To give, costs us little—to inquire, might cost us much. Self-indulgent nature bids the one—for the other, the feelings of nature must be overcome by duty. Asking pardon of my friend, the good Samaritan did no such thing. He did not fling his penny to the sufferer, without inquiry. He paused on his journey; he ascertained the cause of his misfortune, and what he needed; he conveyed him to a proper place; provided the kind of relief that was most essential; left him in proper charge, and promised to come again. It seems to me to rest on the wrong ground, when we ask, if by indiscriminate alms we do good or harm. The question should be, do we the greatest

quantity of good we might do with the sums that we dispense? When they of old appeared to give their reckoning, it was ten for the ten, and five for the five. Had he who was intrusted with ten talents gained other five, would he have been commended of his Lord?

But if I have not yet said enough, if I have not yet convinced my friend, and left the beggars to despair, there is a unit in the great account: the world takes little note of it, and moral philosophers have balanced their arguments without it: but overlooked, forgotten as it is, it is that which must at last decide in every thing for loss or gain.

The greatest enemy of man is not his misery. There is a blight upon him more bitter than the October wind—a shame more degrading than his body's nakedness. The tears that Jesus shed over Jerusalem were for her sins and her foreseen destruction, not for the misery that thronged her streets; and when he healed the diseases of the body, he administered always to the spirit too. Man is of another mind. He is troubled to see his fellow-creature cold and naked; but not at all that he should live in vice, and perish everlastingly. It is not uncommon, when any thing is undertaken to elevate the moral character of the poor, and give them religious instruction, to hear it said, We had better feed and clothe them. Yet if there be any right principle of charity at all, it must be the same in the servant as in his lord. All misery is the

progeny of sin. If we foster the parent while we endeavour to repress the offspring, what do we but cut from the bitter root a single bud, and scatter the seed of it to produce a thousand? If "to do good to all men," were to procure for them such brief intervals of ease as our alms could most readily purchase, I would not only give money to the beggar, but I think I would advise him to repair to the next public house, and buy with it twelve hours' oblivion of the miseries it could not permanently relieve. It would be by much the larger purchase of enjoyment. But if every root of evil bears its fruit of misery, as surely as the brier bears its thorns, and all human suffering has no other parent, and no other source—what is the principle of that charity, which, in pity for the shivering limb, rewards the beggar's lie, and lest he should go unfed, tempts him to the commission of iniquity? The actings of such a charity are pernicious, by so much as sin is worse than sorrow: and as for the same hours of suffering spared, it may produce a life, ay, and an eternity, of pain, to the individual it encourages, or others whom it entices. And it is false in its principle; because the Lord of all, when he gives his property in charge, would have it used as he had it used—to diminish sin, and alleviate its consequences—till he returns to banish both from his regenerated kingdom. To give increase to iniquity, though by doing so we could banish want

and nakedness from our streets, would not be to fulfil his commission, or promote his glory.

To act properly, and judge rightly, we must be determined in action and in judgment by principle, not by sensation. I think the purpose of God is the principle of charity. That they who make light of sin should act upon this principle, is not to be expected. They think, perhaps, a man had better lie than hunger—had better thieve than suffer. It is the estimate they make for themselves in politer ways—no wonder if they make it for the poor, and conclude it better to corrupt than to refuse them. But they who dread sorrow less than sin, and would rather choose it on their own behalf, feeling for others, as for themselves, may find, I think, in this argument, something to make weight against the pleadings of mere humanity, without reference to the will of God.

No. XXXVII.

HUMILITY.

Humility, the fairest, loveliest flower
That grew in Paradise, and the first that died,
Has rarely flourish'd since on mortal soil—
It is so frail, so delicate a thing,
'Tis gone if it but look upon itself—
And she who ventures to believe it hers,
Proves by that single thought she has it not.

C. Fry.

In early spring—in that animated month, when all things return to life, but that which returns to it never — when all revives, and lives again, and blossoms again, and enjoys again, except that which blooms but once, and fades but once, and returns to its delights no more—when every thing is gay, but the heart whose wintry blighting seems but the sadder, amid the budding of surrounding joy—In the morning of such a spring, I was walking by the side of a stream. A thousand thousand flowers were on its banks, and the brightest of sunbeams on its waters. Attracted by some blossom half hidden in the osiers, many a time I stooped in eager anticipation of finding something new: or, deceived by dis-

tance, ventured the unsteady footing of the bank, to reach what seemed an unknown plant. When attained, they proved no other than the flowers of every meadow, and of every spring, a thousand times gathered and despised. They could blow again, and be beautiful again; but they could not bring again the eager animation with which curiosity examined them at first, or the delight with which the eye of taste dwelt first upon their charms. No—it is this impossibility of renewing foregone pleasures, this necessity of proceeding, that makes the circle of the returning year so dissonant sometimes to the feelings of humanity, when long and deeply tried, and experienced, like him of old, in the insufficiency of this world's pleasures and pursuits.

Thus was I thinking, when interrupted by the approach of one, whom from the little tin box, and the look of research, I perceived to be a botanist also. He scarcely approached me, when, opening his box with carefulness, "If you are a botanist," he said, "I have something worth your seeing." The treasure was soon exhibited. It was a flower, or, as the unlearned would have said, a weed of extreme rarity. Botanical registers had described its parts and properties; there were circumstances in its formation extremely curious, and peculiar to itself; but as they are curious only to the scientific, I need not particularly describe them. This plant had been rarely found in Britain; there was no

beauty in it to an untaught eye; but having heard of it as a rarity, and of the extraordinary formation of its parts, to me it had all the charm of novelty and curiosity. Pleased with my animated participation in his triumph, the botanist generously offered me a share of the booty, which I transferred with no small eagerness from his box to my own.

It was enough—I sought no more that day. Returning homeward in all the pride of possession, I opened the box to every body I met, and called at every house in which I was acquainted, to exhibit this wonder of wonders. Alas! for the vanity of human expectations! The first person I saw was a lady, whose staircase was scarcely navigable for the baskets of exotics that jammed the turnings—whose windows could not be opened, lest it should blight the Orange-flowers, nor her doors shut, lest it should stifle the Geraniums. With utter scorn she looked upon my withered weed. Grown in a ditch, and grown in England—of what value on earth could that be? In vain I told the rarity of the plant, and the difficulty of finding it—She wondered, for her part, why any one should wish to find it. The next person I saw was a gentleman who expended an income of many hundreds upon his gardens and conservatories. His ultimate of happiness was to have the greatest variety of Roses, or produce the newest specimen of Geranium. To him as much in vain I displayed my proud possession; described in terms of science its secret properties, and descanted on

the wisdom of creation, in the curious adaptation to their uses of parts almost too minute for human observation. He answered me with the greater wonders of his own creation—the strange results of certain grafts and intermixtures—medals and prizes from the Horticultural Society—Camillias as big as a cabbage, and Roses as black as a sloeberry. He did not so much as drop his eye upon my weed. Hope lived again when I got sight of a naturalist—a man of science—a man who had studied Linnæus from his youth up, and published treatises upon every thing. Well has the wise man said, "Pride goes before a fall." While I was getting up my generosity to offer him a part, the naturalist took my flower, twisted it between his fingers, looked at it through his glass, and carelessly returning it to the box, said he did not believe it was the plant we took it for.

There is a flower—Heaven's garlands are woven of its leaves, and its blossoms are twined through the crowns of immortality. It is not a native of earth. It was planted in Paradise, and withered even there. Once only, in its perfectness of beauty, it came within the reach of mortal men; blossomed, dropped a seed and disappeared. The transcript of its characters remains: the outward form, the secret properties, are faithfully recorded: men talk of its beauties and its worth. But where is the residue of its growth on earth? Who finds it, who values it, who knows it, when they see it?

I have been desired to write upon Humility. I paused awhile, to listen and meditate before I spoke. I heard little that could help me in the task, often as I heard the word. From one end of society to the other, I heard men charge each other with the want of it; but the praise of it fell nowhere—unless on some who gave it to themselves. The sensual and the wise, standing ever well with themselves, nothing misgiving of their ruined state, unconscious of their corruption, satisfied with themselves and their deservings, in spite of all that Heaven has denounced against them, charge the want of humility on all religious people in the mass, because they profess to have a better portion and a fairer hope. Every sect and party of religion charges the same fault upon its opponents, for pretending to superior light and knowledge. Individuals, brethren of one house, members of one body, cry the same unceasing cry—and whether, like David between the armies of Israel and Philistia, the bold and gifted servant of the Lord stands out distinguished and alone, the taunt, the wonder, and the pride of surrounding multitudes—or whether, like John in Patmos, cast out and banished from the world, the devoted spirit lives alone with God, in elevated communion with the things unseen, forgetting all besides—whether in the flush of youthful zeal, he noises his joyful tidings through the world, or in the wreck of a chastised and broken spirit hides himself in silence from its snares—the whisper runs the same—he wants Hu-

mility. Or leave the voice of criticism, and the voice of fame, and speak in secret confidence with the Christian of himself—ask him what he wants most, and if he be indeed a Christian, he answers, that he wants Humility.

Apparently, then, there should be no such thing—or it should be the native of some unsearched spot—or its characters should be so doubtful, none can know them. I thought upon these things, and remembered my poor weed. Nobody knew it—nobody liked it. Could I find this flower of Heaven, and present it to my readers, would it share the same fate? I believe it would.

It did so, when in the full beauty of its heaven-formed blossoms, it showed itself upon this bleak and blighting world. What acceptance did the humility of Jesus find in the perfect pattern exhibited in his humanity? When he spake in that character of greatness and wisdom that was his own, he was charged with pride—"Whom makest thou thyself?" Of God he had made himself man—of Lord of all he made himself servant of the vilest—his degradation was of his own making, not his greatness. When he bent his greatness to be the companion of the mean, and sat at meat with publicans and sinners—then his humility was meanness, degradation unworthy of his character. When he looked tenderly on her who bathed his feet with tears, taking pleasure in the demonstration of affection from one by whose very touch the Pharisee thought himself de-

filed, then his humility was ignorance. "Were this man a prophet, he would know this woman is a sinner." When he spake as never man spake the truth and wisdom of his Father, then again he was proud —"Art thou wiser than our father Abraham?" And in that last and lowest humiliation, when the sinless died under the obloquy of sin, his previous boast, his high pretensions, supplied mockery for the rabble—pride was the first and last reproach of the meek and lowly Jesus.

To those, then, who are so ready to charge the children of God with want of humility, I would say, Of this be sure, the more you see of it, the less will you like it. The more abundant in any character shall be its growth, the less agreeable that character will be to you. That flower you affect to look for, would seem, if you found it, an offensive weed. And if it could be exhibited in the saint as perfectly as in his Lord, it would meet with the same acceptance now as it did then. You would not know it when you saw it, nor like it if shown to you.

To them who desire to find and cultivate in their own bosoms this plant of Heaven, I would say, Be sure that you mistake it not for something else: and ignorantly rooting out the holy germ, cherish and foster some ill weed instead. It is common to hear people say of themselves, that they are humble before God, but not before men. I do not perfectly understand what is meant by this. If it means that they are not humble in the sight of men, in the

opinions of men, let them remember Jesus was not. If it means that there is no growth of humility in their conduct and feelings towards each other, they would do well to doubt if there be any before God: for there is in the heart of man no barren principle, however slow may sometimes be its growth, and long its fruit in ripening to perfection. Depend upon this —the features of true Humility are not acceptable to the world, and cannot be; for they are opposed to it in every thing. If, therefore, they show you some brilliant flower of their garden, and tell you that is it, believe them not, nor venture to transplant it to your bosom. If they tell you this one is proud, and that one wants humility, till you begin to think there is no such growth on earth, and so are disposed to content yourself without it, again believe them not. There is such a thing; and the plant that died in Paradise will grow up and blossom yet. Now indeed it is an obscure and sickly thing, cast out of the garden to hide itself in the waste—trodden down of the many, and sought of the few with carefulness and toil—disowned of the wise, and of the proud disliked, and not seldom mistaken by those who should have loved it. If we would plant this flower in our bosoms, or rather cherish it when we find it there, for it is of Heaven's planting, we must believe no testimony respecting it but the record of Scripture, and no example of it but the character of Jesus. In exact proportion as our humility agrees with His, its characters are true—in that in which it differs,

they are false, and our plant is spurious. If yet it bears no flower, are its leaves the same? If yet it is bare and leafless, is its stem the same? If it have no stem, or aught that is visible without, is the root, is the seed of our Humility what Jesus's was?

I shrink from an attempt to describe this beautiful thing. I see it in all its loveliness depicted in the Scripture. If I add any thing to it, I shall give it a character it has not; if I omit any thing, I shall deprive it of its parts, and either way mislead—The utmost I can venture is to drop a hint or two, that may remove the prevailing errors of those who are in search of it.

One essential of Humility is a just appreciation of ourselves. Were it possible to think worse of ourselves than we deserve, that would be no feature of Humility. The pure spirits are not proud, because they see in themselves no impurity; though they would be proud, did they think that purity was of themselves, when they receive it all from God. Neither the saint, who has sufficient proof of God's pardoning love, is proud, because he knows and says he is the heir of everlasting life; though he would be so, did he think he had the promise for any deserving of his own.

Man cannot think worse of himself than he deserves; his iniquity is deeper than he ever yet has fathomed. He, therefore, who thinks worst of himself, is, in this respect, most humble; because he is nearest to the just appreciation of his character,

And as every man has more opportunity of taking measure of his own corruption than that of any one besides, I doubt if any one is really humble till he thinks there is not a living being so unworthy as himself. From the want of this humility comes all that anger, that impatience, that bitterness, that malignant speaking against others' sin, which a growing knowledge of our own will shame to silence.

Another essential of Humility is a just appreciation of our circumstances; by which I intend all that is not within our own responsibility, whether intellectual or extrinsic. The prince who should please to suppose himself a peasant, and act the part of one, would show no humility by doing so; nor the man of talent, nor the scholar who has spent his life in study, should he profess to know less than the unlettered hind, and be led by his judgment when he ought to have guided him with his own. He is humble, when justly appreciating what he is in comparison with those around him; he knows that the distinctions of wealth, and rank, and intellect, are of no intrinsic value to-day, and will be gone to-morrow; and feels more shame for the use of them, than pride in the possession; and takes no more glory to himself for his endowments, than he would give to a servant whom he should lade with gold to do his errands; but rather carries them, as the packhorse some precious load—a charge, but no honour. This is the humility, the want of which produces so much arrogance and contempt; the pride of birth, and

wealth, and intellect; and that eager aspiring after them which gives birth to ambition, jealousy, and strife; all which will cease or diminish as the virtue grows.

Another character of Humility is to be content that others should justly appreciate us also. O, how slow is this fair bud in blowing! How long after a man has discovered his own obliquity, does he shrink and writhe under the slightest touch of blame. What subterfuges, what artifices, he makes use of to pass himself for something that he is not; and how indignant, how abashed, when his infirmities are exposed! And how long, after he professes to despise the world's distinctions, does he struggle to pass in it for something—to hide his ignorance, his meanness, or his poverty! What bitterness is in his heart against those who speak ill of him—though they cannot speak a hundredth part the ill he knows! What pangs of wounded pride when he is treated as an inferior, or refused the deference he is aiming to attain! Hence all our haughty vindications, or impatience of reproof, or undue pretensions—hence all those licensed falsehoods with which men cover from each other the thoughts of their hearts, and the secrets of their houses—the thousand schemes and devices they have recourse to, to seem what they are not, and conceal what they are. Humility is the parent of simplicity and truth; he who is really convinced that he is nothing, will not very long care to be thought something.

Another character of Humility, and the last I shall speak of, is, ourselves and our circumstances duly appreciated, to be content with them. Man cannot bear to see himself so corrupt, so dependent, so helpless to all good—not for that he hates corruption, but because he does not like to lie thus low. He cannot bear to owe every thing to mercy, and will perpetually be pleading some little merit of his own, because pride does not like to give all the glory to another. Real Humility will teach him to be content to loathe himself, that he may better love the Lord who saved him; and he will become in love with the dependence that obliges him to receive all things from his Father's bounty. In respect of circumstances, there is a very subtle pride I have observed in people who think meanly of themselves, of their pretensions and attainments, and so might fancy themselves very humble. But they are impatient of any one who excels them—they cannot endure to be superseded—they look with almost malignant envy on their superiors in talent or condition—and fret themselves with perpetual uneasiness about their own inferiority. This is not Humility. Witness its fruits. Detraction, envy, tenacious sensibility of affronts, jealous suspicion of neglects, and impatient yearnings against Providence for denying us advantages we are not satisfied to be without. Humility will silence these. It knows we have no claim to what we have, much less to more—it wonders why Providence gives any thing, not why

it gives so little—and having used our talents to so little purpose, it is grateful that they were not more.

Such, it appears to me, are the principal branches of that heaven-planted root. Many-coloured, indeed, are the blossoms they put forth, to bless the world that disregards them; acceptable to God, but of little beauty in the estimate of men. It is easy to perceive that sentiments like these would be sufficient to constitute the *principle* of Humility; and however far they lie beyond the reach of human scrutiny—and they are beyond the reach of any scrutiny but God's—the heart that is possessed by them is humble in his sight, whatever men may think of it. To ourselves, and to each other, the existence of the principle of Humility, like that of every other principle, can be verified only by the manifestations of its fruits. I am not afraid, however, that these should long be wanting, where sentiments such as I have described are really implanted in the bosom. There may be no flower—there may be no bud—there may be no full-blown leaf—the careless may walk over the poor feeble weed, and the wise be doubtful of its characters. But let the blessed possessor cherish his heavenly treasure—there may be quite enough even yet to identify its worth. Sentiments such as I have described are not easily mistaken—they can hardly escape detection in careful self-examination—if found, they cannot well deceive, for they never yet inhabited an unregenerate heart; and, amid all the world calls virtue, there is nothing

that in the least resembles them. The seasons will pass, the dews of heaven will fall, and the beams of love increase—it will grow up and blossom, and no man hereafter shall deny it—the fairest ornament of a safer Paradise. Though all to each other, and each one to himself, denies the claim, and with but too much reason, seeing its niggard growth, I doubt not that God beholds in many a bosom the germ of this celestial flower; so altered in its nature now, that where once it could not live, since Jesus planted it, it cannot die.

No. XXXVIII.

JULIA MACDUGAL ARNOT.

Rien ne prête plus au ridicule que cette manie de se croire au-dessus de ce qu'on est, de s'attribuer un mérite qu'on n'a pas, de se persuader qu'on fixe tous les regards, que l'on soumet tous les cœurs; tandis qu'on est à peine remarqué des gens sensés, et que les autres ne nous distinguent que pour s'amuser à nos dépens, et nous désigner comme l'objet de leurs railleries et le jouet de la société.

BOUILLY.

"You are a happy little lamb," said Julia to her pet. I overheard her, as, wrapt in cloth and sable trebly folded, I paced up and down a dozen yards of sunshine, better known for such by its brightness than its warmth; cautiously turning short of the termination of the wall, lest the east wind should turn its corners. She was in the hall, carefully drying and combing, before the stove, her newly-washed lamb, white as the driven snow, and tying a scarlet riband round its neck. "You are a happy lamb," she said, as she pursued her task, "to be thus fondly petted. Yonder are your born brethren in the field, shivering in the wind, and cradled in snow. No one washes them but the evening dew. The shepherd makes them no better bed than the dry straw, and

feeds them with nothing but the fresh-cut grass. While here are you, little thing, living in ladies' bowers, and fed on sweetmeats, and bedded in flannel, and decked with scarlet, and preferred to such high company. I wonder at you, if you are not grateful for your destiny."

Whether this address excited any train of reflection in the mind of the pet lamb, I am not informed —in mine it did. "Is it a happy little lamb," I thought—" the happier for the distinction conferred on it in separation from its kith and kin?" It seemed a speculation worth pursuing—I forgot that the east wind would turn the corners, and proceeded full to the termination of the gravel walk, to look after the condition of the lambs in the field. They were each one on the sunny side of its patient mother, as she stood silent and motionless against the wind. The careful shepherd had foddered them as closely as he could, and sheltered them round with hurdles; but still they shivered in the blast; the half-thawed snow was under their feet, and the green blade but barely visible—its deficiency supplied by fresh-pulled turnips.

" Julia is right, then, I suppose—this is what her lamb was born to. She took it from the mother that has twins; and yonder, with fleece uncombed, and neck unadorned, fed on turnips, and shivering in the breeze, stands the twin brother of the pet. Now is it assuredly a happy lamb, preferred to such a destiny." I returned, and found Julia's favourite

gently reposed on the soft matting beside the stove, in honourable company with the French lapdog. But the train of my reflection was not ended. In idea, I saw this lamb grown into a large uncomely sheep—no pet for a lady, certainly—and as certainly then to be sent back into the flock, and abide the common lot. I did not exactly suppose high-bred feelings, or intellectual refinements, wounded pride, or mortified recollections, would subject the animal to months of mental misery: but in the measure of its capacity to suffer, I did imagine it a stranger among its kindred, shunned by them as an alien, unused to sleep on sods, or feed on turnips, and consequently more exposed to cold and hunger than its hardy companions. And with perfect certainty, I saw it led like them to the slaughter, sold to the same ignominy, doomed to the same knife, without care or question of its nobler breeding. Was it a happy lamb?

The decision does not signify. No lamb, since the beginning of time, has been called upon to choose between the company of its kin, and the fellowship of the lapdog—and till the end of it, no mother sheep will have occasion to determine whether her offspring shall be bred in the sheepfold or the lady's bower. While I was tracing the destiny of the innocent brute, I was really contemplating that of its mistress, and many others within my observation. For who that views reflectively the aspect of society in the present day, but must be struck with the endeavour

visible throughout it to thrust ourselves, to thrust our children, out of the place that providence has designed them for, into some other that seems to be more happy, more elevated, or more honourable, to make them something that their fathers are not, to give them tastes and habits above their birthright, and procure for them other society than that of their equals? I believe it is a losing game, even to the calculators of this world—to the heirs of immortality, I am persuaded, it is a sinful one, and as such, am induced to speak of it. This struggle to be thought, to seem, to be, whether we consider the stake that is played for, the means that are used, or the risk of the venture, is utterly opposed to the tone and principle of a Christian mind, and incompatible altogether with the requisitions of a holy life.

I know no better illustration of my meaning, than the situation and character of Julia Arnot. Her parents lived retired on a secure income of five hundred a-year—whether originally acquired in trade, in arts of war, or arts of peace, I do not know—nobody in the town of W—— knew, and therefore it did not signify. Their income was sufficient for their habits of life, and was the certain inheritance of their only child. Moderate, retired, and religious in their habits, Heaven's blessing was on their store; and they had no desires for themselves beyond their picturesque cottage at the entrance of W——, their garden, their little paddock, and their cows. They had to spare, moreover. They had milk and broken

victuals for the hungry, kind words for the afflicted, and pious counsel for the unwise. They were excellent and beloved: there was no appearance of having fallen from a higher station: neither was there lowness or rudeness, to betray a mean original. Julia, in this home, might have been the happiest of human beings. Every thing she could reasonably desire, every thing, I must think, a Christian woman was justified in desiring, was within her reach. Nay—all things are by comparison; and in the little town of W——, among the ten children of the vicar, and the seven daughters of the apothecary, and other expectants of like doubtful dividends, Julia Arnot, heiress of five hundred a-year, was *prima donna*. And Julia, too, might have been first in better things than wealth. Providence had richly graced her; she was good, and she was lovely; she was benevolent, and—I would say, that she was pious—but God has said, "If any man love the things of the world, the love of God is not in him." The things of the world are many—but if some may be more peculiarly called so than others, it must be those factitious advantages, the whole value of which depends on convention and the world's opinion. I would rather not say whether Julia Arnot was pious. I must be brief, for I mean to draw a sketch, and not to write a story. These happy people had no bitter in their cup, but what they prepared for themselves, or rather for their child. They were cursed—for I can call it nothing less—with a desire to ele-

vate her station in life, and place her in society above their own. Was this a blameable desire? I know that the world will say it was not. I know that from one end of society to the other, from the plodding tradesman, who stints himself to bring up his sons to a profession, to the prosperous commoner, whose chariot wheels go heavily, because there is no coronet on the panels, the elevation of our children is considered a legitimate object of parental care. There is another view of it, however, to the deep-searching eye of truth. If the higher paths of life be the safer ways to Heaven; if the distinctions of earth be badges of Heaven's favour; if the exalted and admired of men be more sheltered from temptation, and more incited to holiness: then elevation in the scale is a legitimate object of desire. If precisely the contrary of this be the case; if God feeds the poor while the rich are sent empty away; if not many great, not many wise or learned, have been called; if they who sow to the flesh are to reap a harvest of corruption; if honours are a temptation, and riches a snare; if He, in whose footsteps we desire to walk, chose to himself the lowest path, and chose his followers there, and left them there, and bequeathed lowliness and poverty for their inheritance, to the end of time; if this be so, how can the elevation of our children above the sphere in which Providence has placed them, be a reasonable object of desire?

Julia's parents thought it so. How it came first

into their heads, I do not know, unless it was at her christening, when Lord Macdugal, an early patron of the family, stood godfather by proxy, and Macdugal was given her for a second name. In the same course of good or evil fortune, a certain Sir Peter Paulett lived with his family at a large place, within a few miles of W——. His children were of the age of the little Julia; they looked at each other at church; they met with their nurses in the fields; and ultimately, when the Miss Pauletts were particularly good, they were allowed to have Julia Arnot home to play with them. The parents, instead of perceiving, as they might have done, the growth of ambition and vanity from these visits, began to perceive in them the destination of their Julia to a higher sphere of life. And why not? She would have an independence—as much as the usual fortune of a peer's daughter. By a little more frugality at home, they could give her a polished education. She could be sent to a fashionable school to make connexion with genteel girls; they could keep her up a little from the young people of the town; and no doubt she would continue to be noticed at the Hall when she grew up. If piety ever whispered that at the fashionable school she would learn the tone and temper of the world they had renounced for her—that at the Hall she would learn tastes and desires their small competency would be insufficient to gratify—that the polish of her education might be at the cost of that holy simplicity she might have imbibed from

their example—it was silenced by the plea, that she would have an extended sphere of usefulness, that the favour of God is not confined to station, and low society can never be essential to the cultivation of religious principle. What, then, is low society,—that thing, of all others, a parent may reasonably dread, and religiously avoid? Is it not a thing of comparison? Can any one be lowered by the society of their equals? The children of the peer are in low society, if he associates them with the children of his tradesmen, though honester men, it may be, and wiser than himself. The tradesman's children are in low society, if companioned with the day labourer and mechanic; and these again have a precedence, which they would dishonour by association with the vagabond pauper. The children of God—would that they always thought so!—are in low society, whenever they choose their fellowship with those who know Him not, however high may be their rank above them.

Julia's parents did not think so. All these plans were executed, and, strange to say, they all succeeded. Julia went to school in London; she was clever, and gained credit; she was amiable, and gained friends; she formed friendship and correspondence with girls of rank and fortune superior to her own; she came back polished and accomplished; and she was received at the Hall, the favourite companion of the Miss Pauletts.

Was Julia a happy girl—the happier for her se-

paration from kith and kin? There were those who thought so. The young ladies of W—— thought so —and mistaking the soreness of their own envy for wounds inflicted by another's pride, instead of friends by whom she might have been cherished, and whom she might have led to every good, they became her unprovoked enemies. The young gentlemen of W—— thought so—and where equal fortunes might have promised suitable alliance, and permanent domestic happiness, it was impossible to suppose Miss Arnot would condescend. The parents — I am not sure what they thought by this time—a parent's eye is keen to read the bosom of a child—a Christian's eye is keen to perceive the punishment of his own errors. I can only relate what I witnessed.

Every day I witnessed the struggle between duty and feeling—between pride and circumstance—between the desire of being, and the consciousness of not being. The demon of Gentility or Ungentility —for I can scarcely tell what it was, that poor Julia's imagination had embodied, to be its perpetual torment—haunted her in city and in field, when she sat in the house, and when she walked by the way, alone or in company, Sunday and working-day— nothing could equal the torment of this merciless pursuivant. From the most frivolous amusement, to the most important of duties, there was nothing it did not meddle with.

Julia had too much mind to care for dress. She had not the smallest pleasure in it for its own sake.

But then the dread of being ungenteel—one must conform to the society one lives in. Her allowance ran short—she could not bear to see it thus expended—she hated the selfish and useless purchases—but what could she do? She must be dressed genteelly, and be like her companions. I saw her one day in a predicament upon this matter. She went to buy a bonnet. She had but two guineas in the world, and one was reserved for some more important purposes. There were two bonnets—they were alike in shape, equally tasteful, and equally becoming—but one was of straw, and the other of Leghorn; the one was a guinea, the other exceeded two. She had really no choice between them. But the town ladies all wore straw—it was so ungenteel—all her friends wore the Leghorn, and she was obliged to have it; though it left her in arrears, deprived her of a real gratification in the expenditure of the second guinea, and obliged her to fail in a promise she had given.

Julia was invited to visit one of her school-fellows in London. This she would have delighted in—but how to get there? Her father had no carriage—he could not afford to let her travel post. Coaches passed the door—but then how ungenteel! She could not possibly arrive at Lady B.'s in a stage-coach. None of her acquaintance would do so. A similar feeling kept her at home on another occasion. To Sir Peter Paulett's balls and fashionable parties, the principles of Julia's parents did not allow of her

going. But Sir Peter was, in these parts, the patron of every thing. For a county ball he filled his house with dancers; for an assize, with judges; and for a Bible-meeting, with saints, as he called them—and valued them all alike. It was on one of these latter occasions that certain distinguished persons were to be there—distinguished, it is true, by rank and talent, but more distinguished for active charity and holy devotedness to God. This was a party to which Julia Arnot might come, and she was kindly pressed. Her heart panted to be among persons whose names she had heard and reverenced so long. But, poor child! what could she do? There was nobody to fetch her home but John the cowherd, a decent and trusty man, the only one her father kept. How very ungenteel it would be for him to appear among the footmen of Lord R. and the Marquis of C.! The thing was impossible—one must have respect to the decencies of life, were it only for the sake of one's genteel connexions.

Julia was an active, healthy girl, and had as good an appetite as other ladies; but this besetting demon could not, some way or other, let her perform in peace even these vulgar functions of humanity. There were certain things at her father's table very good and pleasing to the taste, which it was ungenteel to eat, and not polite to drink; but what I was going to notice is, that her parents, being elderly, and of country habits, liked to dine at two o'clock. Julia's appetite had no objection to this whatever, for it was used to nothing else. The first few days I was with

them, I could not think why the fidgets seized upon her from the time the cloth was laid till it was removed—why she bolted her food like a cat that fears a surprise—why she sat edgeways on her chair to watch the window—and why she recovered her ease as soon as dinner was over, like one escaped from purgatory. It was because it was so ungenteel to dine at two o'clock. Suppose the Miss Pauletts should come in —what would they think? They must see the dinner as they passed the window; or, if not, the house was so small they must smell it. I have reason to believe this perpetual uneasiness during the progress of mastication, subjected the young lady to frequent fits of indigestion.

There happened to be two churches in the town of W——, as there are in many towns. Both had been consecrated by the bishop, both had the service performed with propriety, and both were filled by men of education and character. But for some reason, fully understood only to Julia and her evil spirit, though others might by possibility guess at it, both were not equally genteel. Julia's parents attended at St Paul's, because they there heard the boldest and the purest truth. Julia, from education and from principle, preferred it too. The rector of St Paul's was the more learned and more eloquent preacher—but still St Peter's was the more fashionable church. With umbrella and clogs as she hastened to the one, Julia passed the carriages going to the other, and hung down her head for shame.

As she passed through the crowd of poor that lined the aisles, she had an involuntary sense of degradation. She was not ashamed of her principles, or of the doctrine she went to hear, but she was ashamed of the congregation. She would not have blushed to hear it said none but Methodists went to St Paul's; but she was ashamed when it was said none but vulgar people frequented it. I do not say she therefore left her church—I hope she never will—but she went not to the service with an undisturbed and tranquil mind.

One day I found the young lady in the parlour, in deep, and seemingly sad consideration; a parcel before her on the table. "I cannot tell what to do," she said to me. "Dame Wenham is very ill—she has nothing to eat, and they want flannel to wrap her in. I have things here ready for her, but John is gone to market, and Sarah is washing, and I have nobody to take them."—"Take them yourself," I replied: "it is no farther than your usual walk, and this parcel is of no great weight."—"This is what I was thinking of,"—taking up the bundle;—"the woman is suffering—perhaps dying—I would not mind carrying three times as far; but"—laying it down again — "it is so ungenteel to carry parcels — I cannot be sure of not meeting any body." I offered to go with her, and bear the obnoxious burden through the town, but was surprised to see she still hesitated. "Well, Julia, what is the matter now? We are losing time, and you say the woman is suf-

fering."—"I am thinking," she replied—I am glad to say, blushing for herself the while,—"I am thinking, if any body sees us, it will be quite as ungenteel to be walking with you and the parcel in your hand, as if I carried it myself."—"Then ring for your footman, Julia," I replied, half angrily. "Indeed, I wish I had one," she said, half angry too. "And why have you not one? It is very ungenteel."—"We cannot afford it; you know we are not rich."—"But then, how came you not to be rich? Your friends at the Hall"——Julia now perceived my bearing—she saw I wanted her to say that Providence had assigned it otherwise—she blushed, and was silent. "My dear girl," I said, "examine your heart, and see if it is not in actual rebellion against Heaven for the portion assigned you upon earth. And what a portion is it! You have not a single want but those of vanity—you have not a single difficulty, a single care, but those you have created for yourself. And this is the beneficent allotment of which you dare to be ashamed—and you hesitate in an act of duty, lest people should observe that you are—where God has placed you!"

These were the outward appearances of Julia's besetting misery—few doubtless, in comparison with its actings in her own bosom. I appeal to any lady, similarly possessed with the demon of gentility, without adequate means, to say how many pleasant moments it embitters, how many duties it suspends, how much falsehood and subterfuge it induces, and

how much of sinful passion it kindles in the heart. My tale runs long, and space is running short.

It may be said that I have painted only the disadvantages of keeping *good company;* which, admitting there be some, are yet overbalanced by the gain. Julia, with her friends sharing their advantages, and enjoying their society, might feel herself repaid for occasional difficulties at home.

In case any young lady should not know what sort of happiness she misses by keeping her station and associating with her equals, it would be worth while to describe it. I wish I could. I would measure the moments in which Julia's vanity was gratified, against those in which it was mortified—the hours in which she enjoyed the good society, against those in which she endured it because it was so called—the times of gratitude to Heaven for the advantages afforded her, against those of self-approach for the sins she was betrayed into—the consciousness of moving in society above herself, against the consciousness of being below the society she moved in—the pleasure of seeming to be somebody, against the fear of being discovered to be nobody. I should be obliged to any lady who has tried it, to draw this picture for me, and I will insert it in some future number. At present I have more serious matter.

The lamb, with whose destiny I began my story, seemed for a little while to have the advantage of his fellows; in one season he grew to be a sheep, exposed to the same evils, and in another shared

their fate. The distinctions of society are nothing more than this. Whether it is or is not a temporal advantage to stand a little higher in the scale, has never been decided; it cannot, because we have no weights, or scale of measurement, by which the happiness of individuals can be compared; and if we had, it must be the happiness of the class, and not of any individual in it. But this we know most certainly. Elevation in life is no security against its severer evils: in many cases it is a greater exposure to them, and a fearful increase of their bitterness. And we know, that, one brief season past, the converging paths of life, so seeming distant once, meet in a point and terminate. And thus again I say, the high things of the world—I speak comparatively, I mean any thing above the point where Heaven has placed us—are not legitimate objects of a Christian's aim. And surely religious parents, who make it an object of pursuit, or even of desire, to bring up their children above their situation, and seek connexion for them in a higher circle, are forgetful altogether of the first principles of their profession—renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world—all in it that tends not to godliness, and comes not from God. And yet daily for this object, in our Christian world, we see principle sacrificed, peace of mind foregone, contamination risked, usefulness abridged, duties neglected, doubtful practices connived at, selfish expenditure encouraged, the bosom harassed with perpetual struggles against opposing

fortunes—for no better object than to gain for our children a little more of that on which a woe has been many times pronounced of God, but never yet a blessing.

No. XXXIX.

A DIFFICULT QUESTION.

Les uns disent: Rentrez au-dedans de vous-mêmes; et c'est là où vous trouverez votre repos : et cela n'est pas vrai. Les autres disent: Sortez dehors; et cherchez le bonheur en vous divertissant : et cela n'est pas vrai. Le bonheur n'est ni dans nous, ni hors de nous; il est en Dieu et en nous.

PASCAL.

I REMEMBER, many years ago, to have occupied the corner of a window-seat in a small but very elegant house in Montague Square, during a morning visit—more interesting than such visits usually are, because there was something to talk about. The ladies that met had each a child—I believe an only girl—just of the age when mothers begin to ask every body, and tell every body, how their children are to be educated. The daughter of the house, the little Jemima, was sitting by my side—a delicate little creature, with something very remarkable in her expression. The broad projecting brow seemed too heavy for its underwork ; and by its depression, gave a look of sadness to the countenance, till excited animation raised the eye, beaming vivacity and strength. The sallow paleness of the complexion

was so entirely in unison with the features and the stiff dark locks that surrounded them, it was difficult to say whether it was or was not improved by the colour that came and went every time she was looked at or spoken of. I was a Listener then, as well as now, and on this occasion an attentive one; for being not yet a woman, it was very essential to me to learn what sort of a one I had better be: and many indeed were my counter resolutions as the following debate proceeded:—

"You are going to send your daughter to school, I hear?" said Mrs A., after some discourse of other matters. Mrs W. replied, "Really I have not quite determined—I scarcely know what to do for the best. I am only anxious she should grow up like other girls; for of all things in the world, I have the greatest horror of a woman of talent. I had never thought to part from her, and am still averse to sending her from home: but she is so excessively fond of books, I can get her to do nothing else but learn; she is as grave and sensible as a little woman. I think, if she were among other children, she would, perhaps, get fond of play, and be more like a child. I wish her to grow up a quiet, domestic girl, and not too fond of learning. I mean her to be accomplished—but at present I cannot make her distinguish one tune from another."

Mrs A. answered, "Indeed!—we differ much in this respect. I am determined to make Fanny a superior woman whatever it may cost me. Her

father is of the same mind; he has a perfect horror of silly, empty-headed women—all our family are literary—Fanny will have little fortune; but we can afford to give her every advantage in her education; the best portion we can leave her. I would rather see her distinguished for talent than for birth or riches. We have acted upon this intention from her birth. She already reads well; but I am sorry to say she hates it, and never will open a book, unless she is obliged; she shows no taste for any thing but making dolls' clothes and spinning a top."

At this moment a hearty laugh from the little Fanny, who had set herself to play behind the curtain, drew my attention towards her. She was twice as big as my companion on the window-seat, though but a few months older: her broad flat face showed like the moon in its zenith, set in thin, silky hair; and with eyes as pretty as they could be, expressing neither thought nor feeling, but abundance of mirth and good-humour. The colouring of her cheek was beautiful—but one wished it gone sometimes, were it only for the pleasure of seeing it come again. The increasing seriousness of the conversation recalled my attention.

"I am surprised," Mrs W. was saying, "at your wishes on the subject. I am persuaded a woman of great talent is neither so happy, so useful, nor so much beloved, as one of more ordinary powers."

"I should like to know why you think this?"

rejoined her friend: "it appears to me she should be much more so."

"My view of it is this," replied Mrs W.: "a woman's sphere of usefulness, and of happiness, and of affection, is her domestic circle; and even beyond it, all her task of life is to please and to be useful."

"In this we are quite agreed," said Mrs A.; "but since we are well set for an argument, let us have a little method in it. You would have your child useful, happy, and beloved, and so would I—— but you think the means to this end, is to leave her mind uncultivated, narrow, and empty, and consequently weak."

"This is not my meaning: there are many steps between stupidity and talent, ignorance and learning. I will suppose my child what I wish her to be, about as much taught as women in general, who are not esteemed clever, well-mannered, and well-accomplished. I think it is all that can contribute to her happiness. If her mind is occupied as you will say, with little things, those little things are sufficient to its enjoyment, and much more likely to be within her reach, than the greater matters that fill greater minds. The companionship of an ordinary mind, a thing much more likely to be met with, whether in marriage or any other near connexion, than an elevated one, will leave no void in her feelings; and if even she be connected with those she is incapable of understanding, in pursuing her own duties and avocations she will be quite

happy without. What we are not capable of, we never want—what we are capable of, we may want and be miserable. In society she will not certainly interest a whole party by conversation, or convey pleasure and improvement to whomsoever she converses with ; but neither will she be sick to death of the company she has amused, nor feel the poverty of for ever spending what nobody repays. My common character will enjoy herself where your superior woman would go to sleep, or hopelessly wish she might. In short, she will find fellowship and reciprocation in every little mind she meets with, while yours is left to pine in the solitude of her own greatness."

At the close of this speech, I felt quite determined that I would not be a clever woman.

Mrs A. rejoined—"You have left my genius in a doleful condition, though I question whether you will persuade her to come down. I will admit, however, for I am afraid I must, that the woman of talent is less likely to find reciprocation, or to receive enjoyment, from ordinary people and ordinary circumstances ; but then she is like the camel that traverses the desert safely where others perish, because it carries its sustenance in its own bosom. I will concede certain yawnings during a large dinner, and a certain dropping of the eyelids pending the performance of young ladies on the piano, especially if it happens to be Rossini instead of Mozart, as symptoms of losing enjoyment where others find it. But in return, I must beseech you to visit with me your

unlettered ladies in wet weather—in a long December evening, when you will find them sitting in the dark, lest lighting candles early should make it seem longer —in a lonely country house, when the children are asleep, and the husband away, and the servants are so unfortunately attentive as not to want teasing. I never remember to have heard a really clever and cultivated woman complain of *ennui* under such circumstances—no small balance on the side of enjoyment positive, is misery escaped. But to leave jesting—which, I am aware, is not argument—admitting that the woman of more elevated mind derives less pleasure from the adventitious circumstances that surround her, from what money can purchase, and a tranquil mind enjoy, and activity gather, of the passing flowers of life—she has enjoyments, independent of them, in the treasures of her own intellect. Where she finds reciprocation, it is a delight of which the measure compensates the rareness; and where she finds nothing else to enjoy, she can enjoy herself. And when—for such times there are—the peopled walk of life becomes a wilderness, and the assiduities of friendship rest unclaimed, and the sensible gratifications are withered before the blight of poverty, and the foot is too weary, and the eye is too dim, to go after what no one remembers to bring, still are her resources untouched—poverty cannot diminish her revenue, or friendlessness leave her unaccompanied, or privation of every external incitement consign her to the void of disoccupied powers.

She will traverse the desert, for her store is with her—and if, as you have suggested, she be doomed to supply to others what no one pays her back, there is one who has said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

At this point of the discussion, I made up my mind to be a very clever woman.

Mrs W. resumed—"You will allow at least, that selfish enjoyment is not the object of existence; and I think, on the score of usefulness, I shall carry my poor dependent housewife far above your self-sufficing blue. And for this reason. The duties which Providence has assigned to women, do not require extraordinary intellect. She is the daughter, the wife, the mother, perhaps the nurse—good sense and good feeling, a pleasing exterior and an affectionate heart, are all that is necessary for the fulfilment of the duties incident to these characters; endowments that need not the help of books or learning. If she be poor, assiduous industry will make her house comfortable; if she be rich, taste and attention will make it elegant. She can manage her husband's household, and economise his substance; and if she cannot entertain his friends with her talent, she can at least give them welcome; and be his nurse in sickness, and his watchful companion in health, if not capable of sharing his more intellectual occupations. She can be the support and comfort of her parents in the decline of life, or of her children in their helplessness, according as her situation may be.

And out of her house she may be the benefactress and example of a whole neighbourhood ; she may comfort the afflicted, and clothe and feed the poor, and visit the sick, and advise the ignorant ; while by the domestic industry, and peaceful, unaspiring habits, with which she plods, as you may please to call it, through the duties of her station, whether higher or lower, she is a perpetual example to those beneath her, to like sober assiduity in their own, and to her children's children, to follow in the path in which she leads them. She may be superintending the household occupations, or actually performing them ; giving employment by her wealth to others' ingenuity, or supplying the want of it by her own, according as her station is ; but still she will make many happy. I am not so prejudiced as to say, that your woman of talent will refuse these duties—of course, if she has principle, she will not. But literary pursuits must at least divide her attention, if not unfit her altogether for the tasks the order of Providence has assigned her : she will distaste such duties, if she does not refuse them ; while the distance at which her attainments place her from ordinary minds, forbids all attempts to imitate or follow her."

I here determined to have no intellect whatever.

"You have drawn a picture," answered Mrs A., "which would convert half the world, if they were not of your mind already, as I believe they are. It is a picture so beautiful, I would not blot it with the shadow of my finger. I concede that talent is not

necessary to usefulness, and a woman may fulfil every duty of her station without it. But our question is of comparative usefulness; and there I have something to say. It is an axiom, that knowledge is power; and if it is, the greater the knowledge, the greater should be the power of doing good. To men, superior intelligence gives power to dispose, control, and govern the fortunes of others. To women, it gives influence over their minds. The greater knowledge which she has acquired of the human heart, gives her access to it in all its subtleties; while her acknowledged superiority secures that deference to her counsels which weakness ever pays to strength. If the circumstances of her condition require it, I believe the greater will suffice the less, and she will fulfil equally well the duties you have enumerated; shedding as bright a light upon her household as if it bounded her horizon. Nay, more—there may be minds in her household that need the reciprocation of an equal mind, or the support of a superior one—there may be spirits in her family that will receive from the influence of intellect what they would not from simple good intention. There may be other wants in her neighbourhood than hunger and nakedness, and other defaulters than the ignorant and the poor. Whether she writes, speaks, or acts, the effect is not bounded by time, or limited to space. That is worth telling of her, and is repeated from mouth to mouth, which, in an ordinary person, none would notice. Her acknowledged supe-

riority gives her a title, as well as a capacity, to speak where others must be silent, and carry counsel and consolation where commoner characters might not intrude. The mass of human misery, and human need, and human corruption, is not confined to the poor, the simple-minded, and the child. The husband's and the parent's cares are not confined to their external commodities, nor the children's to the well-being of their physical estate. The mind that could illumine its own solitude, can cheer another's destitution—the strength that can support itself, can stay another's falling—the wealth may be unlocked, and supply another's poverty. Those who in prosperity seek amusement from superior talent, will seek it in difficulty for advice, and in adversity for support. If I would name names of women who have been distinguished for talent, I would ask you how many blessings have been heaped on them, which they never heard—how many smiles they have lighted, which never shone on them—how many sorrows soothed, that never were confided to their sympathy. The knowledge of the human heart, the power of influencing it, and the capacity of administering to its necessities, are usefulness beyond our sphere of action, or our term of years; they go where we never went, and continue when we are found no longer. And though I will allow that this is not a woman's most common task, I cannot allow that what God has given, accepted, and blessed, can be out of the order of his providence."

Here I made up my mind to have a great deal of intellect.

" If I granted your position on the subject of utility," said Mrs W., " I am afraid I should prove the world very ungrateful by the remainder of my argument ; which goes, you know, to prove the woman of distinguished talent less beloved than those who walk the ordinary paths of female duty. I must take the risk, however ; for, of all women in the world, your women of genius are those I love the least ; and I believe, just or unjust, it is a very common feeling. We are not disposed to love our superiors in any thing, but least of all in intellect ; one has always the feeling of playing an equal game, without being sure that no advantage will be taken of our simplicity. A woman who has the reputation of talent, is, in this respect, the most unfortunate being upon earth. She stands in society, like an European before a horde of savages, vainly endeavouring to signify his good intentions—if he approaches them, they run away ; if he recedes, they send their arrows after him. Every one is afraid to address her, lest they expose to her penetration their own deficiencies. If she talks, she is supposed to display her powers—if she holds her tongue, it is attributed to contempt for the company. I know that talent is often combined with every amiable quality, and renders the character really the more lovely ; but not therefore the more beloved. It would, if known—but it seldom is known, because seldom ap-

proached near enough to be examined. The simple-minded fear what they do not understand, the double-minded envy what they cannot reach. For my good, simple housewife, every body loves her who knows her; and nobody who does not know her troubles themselves about her. But place a woman on an eminence, and every body thinks they are obliged to like or dislike her; and being too tenacious to do the one without good reason, they do the other without any reason at all. Before we can love each other, there must be sympathy, assimilation, and, if not equality, at least such an approach to it, as may enable us at least to understand each other. When any one is much superior to us, our humility shrinks from the proffers of her love, and our pride revolts from offering her our own. Real talent is always modest, and fears often to make advances towards affection, lest it should seem, in doing so, to presume upon itself—but having rarely the credit of timidity, this caution is attributed to pride. Your superior woman, therefore, will not be generally known or beloved by her own sex, among whom she may have many admirers, but few equals. I say nothing of marriage, because I am not speculating upon it for my child, as upon the chances of a well-played game—but it is certain, that the greater number of men are not highly intellectual, and, therefore, could not wisely choose a highly intellectual wife, lest they place themselves

in the condition in which a husband never should be, of mental inferiority."

Now, I thought I would be thoroughly stupid.

"Mrs W.," answered her friend, "I am aware this is your strongest post; but I must not give ground without a battle. A great deal I shall yield you. I shall give up quantity, and stand upon the value of the remainder. Be it granted, then, that of any twenty people assembled in society, every one of whom will pronounce your commonplace woman to be very amiable, very good, and very pleasing, ten shall pronounce my friend too clever for their taste, eight shall find her not so clever as they expected, and of the other two, one at least shall not be sure whether they like her or not. Be it granted, that of every five ladies assembled to gossip freely, and tell out their small cares and feelings to the sympathising kindness of your friend, four shall become silent as waxwork on the entrance of mine. And be it granted—which is really very generous of me—that of any ten gentlemen to whom yours would be a very proper wife, not more than one could wisely propose himself to mine. But have I, therefore, lost the field? Perhaps, she would tell you no—the two in twenty, the one in five or ten, are of more value in her estimation than all the number else. Things are not apt to be valued by their abundance. On the jeweller's stall, many a brilliant trinket will disappear, ere the high-priced

gem be asked for—but is it, therefore, the less valued, or the less cared for? When beloved at all, she is loved permanently—for in the lapse of time, that withers the charm of beauty, and blights the simplicity of youth, her ornaments grow but the brighter for the wearing. If difficult to reach—like the deep mine, that the light adventurer abandons in discouragement, once penetrated, it will never be relinquished, because it cannot be exhausted. Those who, in the sunshine, amused themselves elsewhere, will come, in the hour of danger, to seek shelter in her bosom, and, like the constant ivy, bind their weakness fondly round her strength. And how intense are the affections thus formed! Would she change them for the small likings of a multitude with whom she has few sentiments in common? In proportion to the depth of the intellect, I believe, is the depth of every thing—feelings, affections, pleasures, pains, or whatever else the enlarged capacity conceives. It is difficult, perhaps, for an inferior mind to estimate what a superior mind enjoys in the reciprocation of affection. Attachment, with ordinary persons, is enjoyed to-day, and regretted to-morrow, and the next day replaced and forgotten: but with these it can be forgotten never, because it can never be replaced."

As the argument, thus terminated, converted neither party, it is needless to say it left me in suspense. Mrs W. was still determined her child should not be a superior woman—Mrs A. was still

resolved her child should be clever at all ventures—and I was still undetermined whether I should be clever or not. The little Fanny laughed aloud, opened her large round eyes, and shouted, "So I will, mamma!" The little Jemima coloured to the ends of her fingers, and lowered still farther the lashes that veiled her eyes.

My paper has already reached its customary length. Shall I be excused, if I, for once, transgress, and prolong it yet considerably? For I, like Solomon, though neither so wise nor so old, have seen the end of many things as well as the beginning; and of this among the many. I have seen Fanny and Jemima brought up in pursuance of their parents' determination—they have become women, and I have seen the results. But when I consider that there is all this to tell, and the moral yet to come, which is generally much longer than my tale, I feel the necessity of deferring it to some future paper, begging my readers to wait for it, before they determine to be either clever or stupid, learned or unlearned.

No. XL.

EASILY DECIDED.

Il faut juger de ce qui est bon ou mauvais par le volonté de Dieu, qui ne peut-être ni injuste ni aveugle ; et non pas par la nôtre propre, qui est toujours pleine de malice et d'erreur.

PASCAL.

I WAS walking with some friends in a retired part of Sussex. It had rained for fourteen days before, and I believed it rained then—but there is a belief among the ladies of that county, that it is better to walk in all weather. The lane was wide enough to pass in file, with chilly droppings from the boughs above, and rude reaction of the briers beneath. The clay upon our shoes showed a troublesome affinity to the clay upon the road. Umbrellas we could not hold up because of the wind; and clogs we carried in our hands, because they would not stay on our feet, increased the value of exertion. But it was better to walk than stay at home, so my companions assured me, for exercise and an appetite. After pursuing them, with hopeless assiduity, for more than a mile, without sight of egress or sign of termination, finding I had already enough of the one, and doubting how far the other might be off, I lagged behind, and

began to think how I might amuse myself till their return. By one of those fortunate incidents, which they tell me never happen to any body but the Listener, I heard the sound of voices over the hedge. This was delightful. In resuming my proper occupation, I forgot both mud and rain, exercise and appetite. The hedge was too thick to see through, and all that appeared above it was a low chimney, from which I concluded it concealed a cottage garden. "What, in the name of wonder, Jem, can you be doing?" said a voice, significant of neither youth nor gentleness. "I war'nt ye I know what I'm about," said another, more rude than unkindly.—"I'm not sure of that," rejoined the first; "you've been hacking and hewing at them trees these four hours, and I do not see, for my part, as you're like to mend them."—"Why, mother," said the lad, "you see we have but two trees in all the garden, and I've been thinking they'd match better if they were alike; so I've tied up to a pole the boughs of the gooseberry-bush that used to spread themselves about the ground, to make it look more like this thorn, and now I'm going to cut down the thorn, to make it look more like the gooseberry-bush."—"And what's the good of that?" rejoined the mother—"has not the tree sheltered us many a stormy night, when the wind would have beaten the old casement about our ears? and many a scorching noon-tide, hasn't your father before you eaten his dinner in its shade? And now, to be sure, because you are the

master, you think that you can mend it!"—"We shall see," said the youth, renewing his strokes. "It's no use as it is—I dare say you'd like to see it bear gooseberries."—"No use!" exclaimed the mother, "don't the birds go to roost on the branches, and the poultry get shelter under it from the rain? And after all your cutting, I don't see as you're likely to turn a thorn-tree into a gooseberry-bush."—"I do not see why I should not," replied the sage artificer, with a tone of reflectiveness—"the leaf is near about the same, and there are thorns on both; if I make that taller, and this shorter, and they grow the same shape, I don't suppose you know why one should bear gooseberries any more than the other, for as wise as you are."—"Why, to be sure, Jem," the old woman answered, in a moderate voice, "I can't say that I do; but I am sixty-eight come Michaelmas, and I never heard of gooseberries growing on a thorn." —"Haven't you, though?" said Jem—"but then I have, or something pretty much like it—for I saw the gardener, over yonder, cutting off the head of a young pear-tree, and he told me he was going to make it bear apples."—"Well," said the mother, seemingly reconciled—"I know nothing of your new-fangled ways—I only know it was the finest thorn in the parish—but, to be sure, now they're more match-like and regular."

I left a story half told. This may seem to be another, but it is in fact the same. Jem in the Sussex lane, and my friends in Montague Square, were

engaged in the same task, and the result of the one would pretty fairly measure the successes of the other; both were contravening the order of nature, and pursuing their own purpose, without consulting the appointments of Providence.

Fanny was a girl of common understanding—such, indeed, as suitable cultivation might have matured into simple good sense; but from which her parents' scheme of education could produce nothing but pretension that could not be supported, and an affectation of what could never be attained. Conscious of the want of all perceptible talent in her child, Mrs A., from the first, told stories of talent opening late, and the untimely blighting of premature intellect; and, to the last, maintained the omnipotence of cultivation. On every new proof of the smallness of her mind, another science was added to enlarge it. Languages, dead and living, were to be to her the keys of knowledge; but they unlocked nothing to Fanny but their own grammars and vocabularies, which she learned assiduously, without so much as wondering what they meant. The more dull she proved, the more earnestly she was plied. She was sent to school to try the spur of emulation; and brought home again for the advantage of more exclusive attention. And as still the progress lagged, all feminine employ and childlike recreations were prohibited, to gain more time for study. It cannot be said that Fanny's health was injured by the overaction of her mind—for having none, it could not

easily be acted upon; but by perpetual dronish application, and sacrifice of all exterior things for the furtherance of this scheme of mental cultivation, her physical energies were suppressed, and she became heavy, awkward, and inactive. Fanny had no pleasure in reading, but she had a pride in having read; and listened with no small satisfaction to her mother's detail of the authors she was conversant with—beyond her age, and as some untalented ventured to suggest, not always suited to her years of innocence. The arcana of their pages were safe, however, and quite guiltless of her mind's corruption—Fanny never thought, whatever she might read; what was in the book was nothing to her; all her business was to *have* read it. Mean-time, while the powers she had not were solicited in vain, the talents she had were neglected and suppressed. Her good-humoured enjoyment of ordinary things, her real taste for domestic arrangement, and open simplicity of heart, were derided as vulgar and unintellectual. Her talent for music was thought not worth cultivating—time could not be spared. Some little capacity she had for drawing, as an imitative art, was baffled by the determination to teach it her scientifically, thus rendering it as impossible as every thing else. In short—for why need I prolong my sketch?—Fanny was prepared by nature to be the *beau idéal* of Mrs W.'s amiable woman. Constitutionally active and benevolent, judicious culture might have made her sensible, and in common life, intelligent, pleasing, useful,

happy; nay, I need only refer to the picture of my former paper, to say, what Fanny, well educated, was calculated to become. But this was what her parents were determined she should not be; and they spent twenty years, and no small amount of cash, to make her a woman of superior mind, and distinguished literary attainments. I saw the result—for I saw Fanny, at twenty, the most unlovely, useless, and unhappy being I ever met with. The very docility of a mind not strong enough to choose its own part, and resist the influence of circumstances, hastened forward the catastrophe. She had learned to think herself what she could not be, and to despise what in reality she was; she could not otherwise than do so, for she had been imbued with it from her cradle. She was accustomed from her infancy to intellectual society; kept up to listen when she should have been in bed; she counted the spots on the carpet, heard nothing that was said, and prided herself on being one of such company. A little later, she was encouraged to talk to every body, and give her opinion upon every thing, in order to improve and exercise her mind. Her mind remained unexercised, because she talked without thinking; but she learned to chatter, to repeat other people's opinions, and fancy her own were of immense importance. She was unlovely, because she sought only to please by means she had not, and to please those who were quite beyond her reach—others she had been accustomed to neglect as unfit for her companionship. She was

useless, because what she might have done well, she was unaccustomed to do at all, and what she attempted she was incapable of. And she was unhappy, because all her natural tastes had been thwarted, and her natural feelings suppressed; and of her acquired habits and high-sounding pursuits she had no capacity for enjoyment. Her love of classic and scientific lore, her delight in libraries, and museums, and choice intellects, and literary *soirées*, was a fiction—they gratified nothing but her vanity. Her small, narrow, weak, and dependent mind, was a reality, and placed her within reach of mortification and disappointment from the merest and meanest trifles.

Jemima—my little friend Jemima—I lived to see her a woman too. From her infancy she had never evinced the tastes and feelings of a child. Intense reflection, keen and impatient sensibility, and an unlimited desire to know, marked her from the earliest years as a very extraordinary child; dislike to the plays and exercises of childhood made her unpleasing to her companions, and, to superficial observers, melancholy; but this was amply contradicted by the eager vivacity of her intellect and feeling when called forth by things beyond the usual compass of her age. Every thing in Jemima gave promise of extraordinary talent and distinguished character. This her parents saw, and were determined to counteract. They had made up their minds what a woman should be, and were determined Jemima should be nothing else. Every thing calculated to call forth her powers

was kept out of the way, and childish occupations forced on her in their stead. The favourite maxim was to occupy her mind with common things; she was made to romp, and to dance and to play; to read story books, and make dolls' clothes. Her physical powers were thus occupied—but where was her mind the while? Feeding itself with fancies for want of truths; drawing false conclusions, forming wrong judgments, and brooding over its own mistakes, for want of a judicious occupation of its activities. Another maxim was to keep Jemima ignorant of her own capacity, lest she should set up for a genius, and be undomesticated. She was told she had none, and was left in ignorance of what she was capable, and for what she was responsible. Made to believe that her fine feelings were oddities, her expansive thoughts absurdities, and her love of knowledge unfeminine and ungraceful, she kept them to herself, and became reserved, timid, and artificial. Nobody could prevent Jemima acquiring knowledge; she saw every thing, reflected upon every thing, and learned from every thing; but, without guide, and without discretion, she gathered the honey and the gall together, and knew not which was which. She was sent to school that she might learn to play, and fetched home that she might learn to be useful. In the former place she was shunned as an oddity, because she preferred to learn; and finding herself disliked without deserving it, encouraged herself to independence by disliking every body. In the latter she sewed

her work awry while she made a couplet to the moon, and unpicked it while she made another; and being told she did every thing ill, believed it, and became indolent and careless to do any thing. Consumed, mean-while, by the restless workings of her mind, and tasked to exercise for which its delicate frame-work was unfit, her person became faded, worn and feeble. To be brief, the parents succeeded in baffling nature's promise, but failed of the fulfilment of their own. At twenty, Jemima was a puzzle to every body, and a weariness to herself. Conscious of her powers, but not knowing how to spend them, she gave in to every imaginable caprice. Having made the discovery of her superiority, she despised the opinions of others, while her own were too ill-formed to be her guide. Proud of possessing talent, and yet ashamed to show it—unaccustomed to explain herself—certain of being misunderstood, and least of all understanding herself—ignorant in the midst of knowledge, and incapable with unlimited capacity—tasteless for every thing she did, and ignorant how to do what she had a taste for, her mind was a luxuriant wilderness, inaccessible to others, and utterly unproductive to its possessor. Unpleasing and unpleased in the sphere she was in, and yet unfitted by habit and timidity for any other, weariness and disgust were her daily portion—her fine sensibilities, her deep feelings, her expansive thoughts, remained, but only to be wounded, to irritate, or mislead her.

Where is the moral of my tale, and what the use

of telling it? I have told it, because I see that God has his purposes in every thing that he has done, and man has his own, and disregards them. And every day I hear it disputed with acrimony and much unkindness, what faculties and characters it is better to have or not to have, without any consideration of what God has given or withheld; and standards are set up, by which all must be measured; though, alas! they cannot take from, or add one cubit to, their statures. "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and one star differeth from another in glory." Why do we not censure the sun for outshining the stars, and the pale moon for having no light but what she borrows? Instead of settling for others what they ought to be, and choosing for ourselves what we will be, would it not be better to examine the condition in which we are actually placed, and the faculties actually committed to us, and consider what was the purpose of Heaven in the former, and what the demand of Heaven in the occupation of the latter? If we have much, we are not at liberty to put it aside, and say we should be better without it—if we have little, we are not at liberty to be dissatisfied and aspiring after more—and surely we are not at liberty to say that another has too much or too little of what God has given? We may have our preferences, but we must not mistake them for standards of right. I may walk in the garden, and take which flower pleases me—but I should be a fool if I trampled upon the rest, because

they are not like it. And I wish, indeed, that parents, in the education of their children, would have no scheme or purpose, but to discover and to forward the purposes of Heaven. Then should we not have hour after hour consumed in teaching them what they cannot learn, because it is the fashion; while powers and faculties that might be used for good, are neglected and despised. Then our children would not be taught to aspire to paths for which they are unfit, or to bury talents for which they must give account. The indiscriminate discipline of a school would not be thought a meet cultivation for every cast of character, and a suitable preparation for every sphere of duty. The timid snowdrop should not be exposed to the summer sunshine, or the myrtle to the chillness of the mountain breeze, to satisfy the prejudice or ambition of a parent. It would surely be better that, instead of being taught to aim after one character and despise another, every one were accustomed to appreciate her own—to feel what she is called to, and fitted for, the capacities she has from nature, the moral purposes to which they may be applied, and the measure of responsibility that pertains to them. Then the superiority which now spends itself in contempt for the less endowed, would be engrossed with the fearful weight of its own responsibilities; and the inferiority which now frets itself in impatience of what it cannot measure, would bless Heaven for its easier and less perilous task.

Every character has beauties peculiar to itself, and

dangers to which it is peculiarly exposed: and there are duties pertaining to each, apart from the circumstances in which they may be placed. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary to the manifest order and disposition of Providence, than to endeavour to be or do whatever we admire in another, or to force others to be and do whatever we admire in ourselves. Which character, of the endless variety that surrounds us, is the most happy, the most useful, and most deserving to be beloved, it were impossible, I believe, to decide—and if we could, we have gained little by the decision; for we could neither give it to our children nor to ourselves. But of this we may be certain—that individual, of whatever intellectual character, is the happiest, the most useful, and the most beloved of God, if not of men, who has best subserved the purposes of heaven in her creation and endowment—who has most carefully turned to good the faculties she has—most cautiously guarded against the evils to which her propensities incline—most justly estimated, and conscientiously fulfilled, the duties appropriate to her circumstance and character. The more elevated and distinguished character—no matter how distinguished by rank, or wealth, or intellect—may tremble on her elevation, and be ashamed, that before Heaven she fills it so unworthily, but must not come down from it. The more lowly in mind or place, may, with humility, confess the little that she has must be assiduously cultivated to answer even the little that is required

—but she must not aspire to be more than God has made her. If we might choose for our children, we should be wise, perhaps—but why do I talk of choosing, when God has determined? To be ambitious for them of talent or intellect, is no other than to be ambitious of wealth, or rank, or other sublunary good—and to make any undue expenditure of time, or care, or money, or, still worse, any compromise of principle, for the attainment of it, is to give to vanity what is due elsewhere—for he who tried wisdom as well as folly, determined of the one as of the other, "This also is vanity." The excessive attempts at this, I do believe, in some cases to amount almost to sin—certainly to an over-estimate of what is so dearly purchased. But on the other hand, as wealth, and rank, and every other earthly distinction, is given of God, and must be used and answered for, so I must believe also that the faculties of the mind are not to be accepted or rejected at our pleasure, as if our task of life were left for us to choose—but to be cultivated, appropriated, and respected, in others and ourselves, as pertaining to our Master, and holden for his service till his coming.

No. XLI.

THE RETROSPECT.

When a fine decisive spirit is recognised, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and leaves him room and freedom. . . . . A man without decision can never be said to belong to himself.

FOSTER.

MR LISTENER,

I DARE say it has happened to you often—for you appear to be a considerable wanderer—to pause upon some eminence attained, and looking back on the space you have gone over, to perceive you have not reached it by the nearest road. You have climbed hedges where the gates stood open—torn yourself, perhaps, with brambles, where the way was cleared—and, though your object is attained at last, you have sat down, wearied and exhausted, by a walk that might have been easy, had you found the shortest and the plainest path. If it has thus happened to you, and if looking from that eminence upon the way you came, you beheld other walkers, wearying and wasting themselves with like mistakes—scrambling over obstacles that are not really in the way, embarrassed only because themselves are out of it—

would you not try to make a signal to them, and point out, if possible, what you see, but they cannot, of the ground before you? Exactly such is my position in existence. I want to tell my story, but no one will listen to it. I have made signals in vain—the walkers are too busy with their scramble to observe me. Unless you will listen to me, of which, from your profession, I have conceived a hope, I have little chance of being heard. You, perhaps, may find the means of making known my story, and will be more attended to than I can hope to be.

Then, sir, I was born between the Thames and the Tweed, and had parents—a father and a mother, and many relatives besides. Not foreseeing that I should ever write my story, I kept no memorandum of my days—journals were less in fashion then than they are now—few, therefore, are the incidents of childhood I can remember. The most vivid traces are of feelings and impressions rather than of events, and these are most important to my purpose. The first, the very first thing I remember to have heard, was, that God was the disposer of all things; the object of obedience and love; the guide, the end, and aim of my existence; in comparison with whose word, and the eternal things with which His name stands connected, the interests of this world were but as the light dust upon the balance, and the opinions of men but as the babbling of ignorance and folly. It was so explained to me in the books from which I lisped my earliest lesson—it was told me so of my mother

as I sat upon her knee, listening to the tales of Jesus' love, and dropping my first tears at the story of Jesus' sufferings. That the kingdom of God was the "one thing needful," to which all else was to be added as subservient, however little I understood the position, was, to the best of my recollection, the first thing I knew, the first that I believed. As years advanced, I heard it repeated every where; I repeated it daily in my prayers, wrote it in my themes, learned it in my lessons, and from my fond and anxious parents, had it pressed upon my mind in every form their pious interest in my welfare could devise. And in now looking back upon my bygone years, I can remember no period at which I doubted the truth of this earliest lesson, that religion was every thing, and the world was nothing. What my childish disposition was, I cannot well remember. Children seldom look inward on themselves—if they examine any thing, it is their actions, not the motives and principles from which they spring. But perfectly well I recollect, there came one day to our house what I now understand, though I did not then, to be a professor of phrenology; and that having duly scanned the proportions of my head, he pronounced, among many phrases too hard for my retention, that I had large Benevolence, an extraordinary development of Love of Approbation, and considerable manifestation of Cautiousness. I remember to have wondered much what this might mean: and, not understanding this occult science, I cannot say I

know any better now than I did then; but I was comforted by hearing it said they were excellent qualities, particularly for a woman.

My parents—need I say it after what has been already written?—were what is called religious people; and though they were numbered with the dead before I was capable of forming an adequate opinion of the state of their hearts, I have every reason to suppose they were what they professed to be, children of God, and followers of Christ. Most of the people about us were of the same character; and the conversation I was habitually a party to, tended to confirm my early impressions of the supreme and exclusive importance of divine things. Exceptions, however, there must have been: for I remember the first time—it was not the last, but the recurrence never afterwards excited attention—that the family retired without the customary prayers, my mother explained to me that some elderly relations being present, who were not used to such things, it was expedient to omit the form that evening, lest it should disgust them with religion. I have a vague recollection also of certain Sundays, when our customary place of worship was changed, with remarks which I could then appreciate, about exciting prejudice in the persons who were staying with us. Some memory I have besides, of childish wonder of things done upon occasions which were habitually prohibited; and things omitted under circumstances to which the greatest importance was used to be attached. But

these things were not explained to me ; the childish wonder at a first occurrence wore away; and without receiving actual instruction to that purpose, I became old enough and wise enough to perceive, that however necessary any thing might be, there are times when it becomes expedient to omit it ; and however wrong a thing may be, there will come occasions by which it may be justified.

To the things which immediately concerned myself, I was a more attentive listener; and very vivid in my memory, still are the impressions made by what I heard. Upon the smaller matters, whether I was to be taught this thing or that thing, whether this person or that was to be admitted to my companionship, whether I was to go to this place, or to that place, a thousand arguments were held in my presence ; and having usually an inclination to one side of every question, it was with no uninterested curiosity I learned, that books, objectionable in a religious point of view, might be given me to improve my mind; companions decidedly disapproved, might be admitted to improve my connexions; and that a multitude of things against which many a scripture was quoted, and many a pious argument advanced, and many an anxious aspiration breathed to Heaven, were ultimately determined by my parents to be expedient for the temporal welfare of their child. I do not remember that while these things were passing, I thought upon the first-learned, first-believed, maxim of my childhood, to mark how the

one thing was perpetually yielded to the many, and the only needful gave way to the much expedient. It would have been well for me, perhaps, if I had—the discrepancy would have been less influential than the insidious intermingling of motives, whose opposition to each other passed undetected in the seeming amity of their combination.

To leave smaller things, the moment came when it must be decided, where I should finish my education. Inclination, and my interest, as I supposed, had now changed sides: I did not wish to be sent from my indulgent home; and with perceptions thus sharpened, did not fail to detect the fallacy of all arguments that bore that way. I heard the dangers of school depicted in colours exaggerated by maternal fear, and its advantages weighed against them by the more accurate calculations of paternal solicitude. I could appreciate neither, but this was easy to be gathered—the dangers were to my moral and spiritual welfare—the advantages were purely temporal, affecting my preparation and accomplishment for the future task of life. I remembered now the lessons of infancy, and took courage in the safe issue of a contest so depending—when, to my surprise, it was determined, that, all things considered, I must go to school. But then what school? This seemed a deeper matter still. Pious, devoted, and conscientious women keep schools—the child committed to them they receive as from the hand of God—the responsibility to the confiding parents for intellec-

tual cultivation, however deeply felt and duly answered, is less considered than the responsibility to God to nurture them for him. My mother wished, my father would have liked, to send me there. But there were other considerations. There were schools of higher name, and name is something—I might connect myself with genteeler girls, and connexion is something—my manners, person, and accomplishments, would be more attended to, and these are much—I had my way to make in life, and had better see something of it before hand—by living in one sphere, and among one sort of people, I should get contracted notions—after all, they could not secure for me the influence of Divine grace; and by seeing both, I should be better able to choose between religion and the world. The many things again outweighed the one; and I was committed, with prayers, tears, and warnings, to the chances of a large but very excellent school.

From this time I have to speak only of my own character. The pious influence of my parents was withdrawn for a season—their first lesson remained, but I had learned another. The phrases of my nursery books, the texts of my themes, were still imprinted on my memory—but I had accumulated others also. I had phrases in store about injudicious zeal, party spirit, narrow-minded preciseness. I had even some texts of Scripture, importing that to the pure all things are pure, that for the promoting of good, I must become all things to all men, and

on no consideration must allow my good to be evil spoken of. The counsels of my parents when I left them enforced my life's first lesson: their conduct commended to me its second; I took both with me o school. Before I left it, my careful father died, and my mother was re-married. A greater degree of independence arose to me out of this circumstance, and I became thenceforth responsible for myself.

My first surprise at school was my own popularity. The teachers declared my pious disposition, my attention to religious duties, and love of my Bible, to be an example to the whole house—my very presence in it was a blessing. The girls declared they never saw a religious person so liberal as Miss S——; though she was a Methodist, she was always agreeable and full of fun; and, howbeit, rather particular in some things, never thought others wrong: if all religious people were like her, the world would be very soon converted. To complete my felicity, the governess wrote home to my confiding parents, that my pious regularity was only surpassed by the soundness of my judgment, and the conciliating sweetness of my disposition. No demagogue of a faction, suddenly feeling upon his brow the pressure of a crown he never dreamed of a pretension to, set about to preserve it with more determined assiduity than my new-found reputation for judicious piety. It became my motto, my key-note, my byword; I wrote it upon my heart, and bound it upon my bosom. How I earned and how I kept

it, may I tell? My intentions might have been called good, inasmuch as I certainly intended to convert the whole house—and I fully expected it, moreover. "Religion," I said to myself, "is altogether lovely, and if justly presented, must attract admiration—the approbation shown for mine is a proof of it. It is a pity religious people do not try to recommend it by being more agreeable.. If they would be more conciliating, and not make themselves particular in trifles, there would not be half the opposition there is. Nobody takes offence at my religion; on the contrary, they respect me for it, because I do not offend their prejudices by injudicious opposition. And then what opportunity I have of influencing them, and leading them to a knowledge of the truth! Certainly pious people are very injudicious. Our Saviour mixed himself with all sorts of people, consulted their feelings, and adapted his discourse to their habits and prejudices, with kindness and forbearance—so did the Apostles also—it is a pity we are not more like them."

After this manner were my reflections at this period. It is remarkable it never once occurred to me that Jesus and his Apostles did not succeed in gaining the suffrages of the world. *I* did. Every body wished they were as good as I—every body confessed their errors and doubts to me—every body borrowed my books, and asked my opinion, and courted my approbation. What I said to them it is impossible now to remember—a few particulars only I can re-

call. When piety was spoken of as eccentric, gloomy, unamiable, I smiled unwillingly, and then turned grave, and sighed, and confessed it was, to be sure, a pity that good people were so injudicious. I disliked extremes as much as they did—religion was not meant to make people gloomy and particular—I did not recommend such examples—but then all pious people were not so—and the conversation ended in my companions wishing all were like me—of course I wished so too. When we spoke of the amusements and practices of the world, I had, to be sure, my opinions—but then I did not condemn all who differed from me—much allowance must be made for those who were differently brought up—and, after all, it was a pity too much importance was attached to outward things, when God looks only at the heart; and this talk ended with every body wishing their conduct as good as mine, and taking comfort in the assurance, that at least their hearts were right. If, on the other hand, we spoke of doctrines—for, young as we were, there was no lack of controversy—I was obliged to soften the triumph better instruction secured to me, by admitting that truly it did not so much signify what one believed—I was not so uncharitable as to suppose every creed wrong but my own—if only our conduct honoured our profession, it did not perhaps signify; and then they wished they could argue as well as I did; but since they acted up to their belief, it was all the same in the sight of God.

All this time, be it known, I did not believe a word of what I said. I thought I was the only religious person in the house, and that all the rest were wrong; and when at home in the vacations, I deeply bewailed the darkness and irreligion of my companions. But this I did to recommend myself—for religion's sake, of course—assured that all must love the representation of the religion of Christ, if copied from his example without the extravagance men have mixed with it. It never occurred to me that they had not loved the original. They loved me. Nor was my conduct less injudicious than my speech. I misspent my Sabbaths, that I might not seem bigoted to forms—joined in every unholy jest, that I might not seem austere—gave into their habits, that I might not seem particular—concealed my religious exercises, that I might not seem ostentatious. Eventually, I found out it was very easy to be religious in heart, without being particular; and when, at the end of three years, I was about to return home, I heard my governess tell somebody I was amazingly improved; the peculiarities of my early education had worn off from mixing with other girls; and she thought I might now make some figure in the world, if old associations were not renewed at home. My surprise to find myself thus estimated as the receiver, instead of the communicator of improvement, was not abated by overhearing my companions speak of me as a dear sweet girl—rather too much of a Methodist when I came first—but they had cured me of all that—and

really now they did not see that in any thing essential I was different from others—except, perhaps, a few odd notions, which did not signify, since I kept them to myself. Thus, after all my pains, it was I who was amended. I felt humiliated by the discovery; and was glad to take refuge in those texts of Scripture which describe the rejection of pious counsel by the children of ungodliness.

I must be brief, and it is time that I be serious. I entered into the world. But what was the world to me? There is but one thing needful—I could neither mind it, nor be hurt by it, since neither its interests nor opinions were any thing compared with eternity and the things of God. In this conviction I began my womanhood as I had begun my life. I was cured of my expectation to convert the world, and took up, instead of it, a persuasion that the world could not be mended. I had Scripture still on my side—it was injudicious to cast my pearls before swine—I must be religious for myself, and keep it to myself, and let the world take its course. The world took its course—well had I taken mine; but though my point was plain before me, the way to it was obscured by a thousand intervening objects; and by some strange anomaly, the one important interest never came to be weighed against the matters of indifference, but it grew light on the balance and was overborne.

And, now, Mr Listener, after five-and-thirty years of responsible existence, pausing on my course to

look behind me, what do I perceive? I have passed applauded and beloved, where the best and holiest of men have been derided and despised. That which in its pure original had no loveliness in it that we should desire it, in my transcendant copy of it has had the smile of approbation from the wise and the vain. That which cost its first professors the loss of all things, has not cost me the sacrifice of a single inclination.' In short, for five-and-thirty years I have successfully united what God has eternally separated. This I have done. If any would know how, listen, and I will tell it. Little things I always gave way in, because they were little, and religion does not consist in minute observances. When I sat in fashionable company, I talked their idle and often sinful talk, with all the zest and understanding of an amateur—religion is not talk, and any expression of the disgust I felt, would have given offence, and provoked ridicule. When I lived where the people of God were distinctly separated from the children of men, I would not identify myself with either—religion is not party, and it was my interest to keep well with all. A thousand times I have sat by, and listened to the impugning of my Maker's laws, and the despising of the religion of Jesus, and smiled assent, or looked indifference, because some person was present, before whom I did not wish to expose my opinions. A thousand times I have helped to criticise and expose those to whose piety I might have bowed my head with shame, because I would not share the ob-

loquy their zeal provoked. When called upon to act with those with whom in motive and principle I was united, I have refused, lest it should offend some friend or patron in the neighbourhood. When called upon to choose a friend, a residence, an occupation —religion doubtless was the most important thing, but circumstances must be taken into the account— and, extraordinary as it may seem, where God disposes all things, and commands his servants to seek his kingdom first, I was always so circumstanced as to be obliged to give up this most important thing, to accommodate the multitude of minor considerations. Consequently, my friends very commonly wanted the best recommendation, my residence generally exposed me to great temptations, and my occupations, so I complained, some way or other always tended to unspiritualise my thoughts and affections. I could not worship God, I could not say my prayers at home, or avail myself of ministry abroad, without considering what would be said, what would be thought; and, when my heart grew cold for want of encouragement, and careless for want of exhortation, I could not go where they were to be found, because circumstances made it convenient, or at least expedient, to do otherwise. In my habits, in the ordering of my house, it was the same. The religious benefit of my servants was, of course, the first consideration—but they were irreligiously inclined; and as they suited me in other respects, I was obliged to

connive at their irregularities, and keep them in good humour, by giving up the regulations suggested by my pious interest in their welfare. As I grew in years, being very much admired for judicious piety, many young persons came about me for advice, and looked to me for example. Doubtless, their salvation was my greatest care—how could it be otherwise, when I considered it the one thing needful, to which all else was nothing, for them as for myself? But for the most part I was so circumstanced, it would have been very injudicious to tell them so—if by advice or example I revolted them, they would leave me for more dangerous companions—it was necessary to be cautious what I said to them, because they had connexions who were jealous of religious influence—above all things it was necessary to make religion inviting—and so well did I know how to accommodate others' circumstances as well as my own, I parted from every body in better humour with themselves than I found them, and particularly avoided exciting suspicion that any body connected with them could be wrong. In great things—yes, a few times in my life great things came to be determined—then there was too much at stake:—God did not require the sacrifice—my earthly happiness—my establishment in life—the keeping of my station in society—my means of usefulness—my very means of existing—of course God knows the circumstances of his creatures, and judges them accordingly. I al-

ways intended to make religion my chief object; it so happened that I was always obliged to yield to circumstances.

Thus, day after day, day after day, went by. Think not it was an easy, unobstructed path. On the contrary, there never was a day but my conscience needed to be appeased for equivocation of opinion, and compromise of principle—the words *judicious, expedient, conciliatory, indifferent, non-essential,* were in perpetual requisition to reconcile me to myself. And difficulties—

> "O what a tangled web we weave,
> When first we practise to deceive!"

the world, myself, and God—I had undertaken to please all, and as each stood opposed to the other, it could only be done by deceiving all. A thousand opinions I asked and controversies I held, whether it was lawful to do things, which to have left undone would have ended all controversy. To a thousand painful struggles and arduous contrivances I was driven, to reconcile the word of God with the opinions of men; when to have chosen between them would have made the path of duty plain. Year after year, year after year, went on. If any would know the result, listen, and I will tell that too.

The sun is in the horizon. There are clouds about it that did not obscure the brightness of its meridian. The vigour of life is exhausted, and the activities of health are decayed. The spirits have lost the zest of being, and the quick interest of fresh-

born existence. The greater part, perhaps the whole, of life is gone; and all that I have gained by it, is to experience at last what I knew at first, that "one thing is needful," and all else is vain. I have proved it, because all other happiness has evaded me—because all other favour has discontented me—because my eye has not been satisfied with seeing, nor my ear with hearing—because I have taken of earth's joys, and found their emptiness; of earth's cares, and found their uselessness, and seen both absorbed in the prospect of eternity. But this which I have expended fifty years in learning, is no more than the first thing I was told, the first thing I believed. Meantime, those whom my connivance encouraged in their choice of earth, are gone to abide their preference in eternity. Those whom I might have warned and did not, are bitterly gathering the fruits of their mistake. They whom I disowned and defamed for the world's sake, are in mansions of glory at their God's right hand. They for whose sake I did it, have forgotten me, but are using still the pleas, and subterfuges, and accommodations, I taught them. And the hours that I have suffered to pass in mischievous discourse, which a word of disapprobation might have checked, can never be purchased back. And the days of ungodly compromise are more than the days that remain for devotedness to God. And now, when I would persuade any one to decision, they answer me, that I did not always think so. And when I speak with any one of the inferi-

ority of earthly things, they answer, that is indeed very true—but unhappily we, none of us, think so; and though my heart disclaims the ungodly fellowship, conscious memory seals my lips. And—worse consequence than all!—He to whom I was devoted at my birth, in whose name I was brought up, whom, at my entrance on life, I hired myself to serve—He, to whose gracious bidding I answered, "I go," but went not—He has had nothing of me yet but treachery, equivocation, doubt, undecided preference, cavil, and evasion—and nothing remains to offer him but the diminished capacities of my diminished years!

No. XLII.

THE STAGE COACH.

Il y a bien des gens qui voient le vrai, et qui ne peuvent y atteindre. Mais il y en a peu qui ne sachent que la pureté de la religion est contraire aux opinions trop relâchées.

PASCAL.

MR LISTENER,

ON a day—suppose it any day, excepting Sunday—I had occasion to travel by the coach from Leeds to Nottingham. I am an Englishman, I have never been abroad, I have no conversation, and I follow the example of my ancestors for generations back, of never speaking unless I have something to say. But nothing escapes my hearing, or passes me unthought upon—a character much resembling, as appears to me, your own. In the coach, at its starting, there were three—another gentleman, a lady, and myself. We met as strangers; put ourselves each one in the position most easy to ourselves, without regarding the accommodation of each other: I pulled up my window, and the lady instantly let down hers, as much as to say, Are you going to stifle us? I put on my hat, as much as to say, Will you give me my

death of cold?—and my *vis-à-vis*, as the ladies say in their quadrilles, took off his—a majority of two to one against me in favour of air, decided without the interchange of a single word; nothing could be more in unison with my taste and feelings. The next thing to accommodating ourselves, was to inspect each other. This was performed on all sides without the least expression that could be perceived of pleasure or disappointment; and we returned to the prudent determination of not offering the first civility, lest it should be wasted on the undeserving. In one respect, I had the advantage of my companions. I had seen the lady in the north, and knew who she was. She was about five-and-twenty; she was polished, and she was cultivated—I would rather not be very particular as to her situation, lest I betray my original by too close description. It was one of responsibility, and she was considered a religious character. All this I knew before, and should probably have added nothing to my knowledge in this interview, had it not occurred, that, after threading various streets and turnings in the good town of Leeds, as we were emerging from it, the coach stopped, and a young man edged his long person into the small remaining space; rubbing his hands with cold, and vowing it was the hottest day he ever remembered in December. It was immediately apparent that he and the lady had met before. He was of Irish blood, therefore not endowed with hereditary silence; and ladies, I believe, seldom obstinately persist in it,

except in the drawing-room retirement after dinner. Speedily, therefore, they were engaged in such conversation as takes place between strangers, who have somewhere and somewhen performed the ceremony of introduction. Excuse me, that my love of description has delayed me thus long from my point—itself may be dismissed in much fewer words. My companions talked of many people and of many things—much, especially, of books. The gentleman was one of those, of whom I dare say your female readers have met with many, and, I hope, have duly appreciated them, who never converse with a woman *bonâ fide*—that is, from a mixture of folly, conceit, and dishonesty, they never say to her what they really think and mean; but what they judge most likely to make her betray and expose any folly, mistake, or extravagance, that may happen to belong to her; agreeing with or opposing her sentiments, not in the verity of their judgment, but as it may best serve the purpose of making her go on. My lady of the stage coach did not seem in the least a match for this sort of manœuvring; and talked on in simple good earnest, without perceiving the satiric twist of her gentleman's mouth, while talking of Romaine, Baxter, and Leighton; books which it was evident to me that he had never read; but not so to their enthusiastic commentator, whom he plied with admiration of their worth. A passage to the antipodes is not always long: and from the holy of the earth, they fell to talking of its base corruptors. Here my

friend was, I suspect, well read: his large rude eyes spread wider with delight, when he found his lady as much *au fait* here as heretofore—conversant not only with infidel philosophers of other days, the nobler mischief-doers of the earth, but also with their small retinue of to-day—with Shelly and the Liberals, even Tom Paine and Hone. But he affected squeamishness—he was hardly competent to give an opinion, being so little conversant with these works—he had his doubts about reading—dropped something about their indelicacy as well as profaneness—perhaps he was too particular—but the manœuvre served his purpose. The Christian lady took up the advocacy, not of their principles, of course, but of their talents—the unfairness of condemning men for opinions—the propriety of reading every thing to form your own judgment—the sufficiency of principle to maintain itself without avoiding its enemies. She did not, of course, agree with them, but she had great delight in their deep reasoning, and expansive thought, and independent spirit, that defied authority, and would yield only to conviction. She called some of these worthies—the enemies of her Saviour, and blasphemers of her God—"fine creatures," "noble spirits," "exquisite writers." Artfully encouraged by the affected ignorance of her converse, she repeated many of their witticisms, impossible not to laugh at, as she said; in spite of their profaneness.

The conversation passed, and the lady left the coach at Sheffield. Much was the comment I had

been making on it in my own mind as it proceeded, and already I had determined to remit to you my listenings, with my thoughts on what I had heard—on the adventurous pride that thus dared the approach of evil—the treachery that held friendly converse with a Master's foes (for doing less than this towards an earthly sovereign, men have been hanged as traitors)—the licentious curiosity that could amuse itself with the mysteries of iniquity. Can holiness amuse itself with sin? Can purity soil itself with foulness? Can the saved laugh round the graves of them that perish, and dress their tombs with laurels? I had determined to write my sentiments on the consequences of a young person, and a female, and a Christian, risking the pollution of her mind by the perusal of such books; and encouraging the profligacy of others, by her defence of them; and grieving that Holy Spirit—which, alas! has a task quite hard enough to restore the soul to holiness—by bidding its opposers do their worst to keep it in corruption. All this I meant to speak of, though little given to talk. But my friend of the coach made the comment himself—I cannot mend it, and with him I leave it. Scarcely had the lady left the coach when he said—to all, I suppose, whom it might concern, for he addressed himself to nobody—"These saints should not be so anxious to exclude us sinners from heaven, for they will be sadly off without us. With all their love of holiness, they cannot do without the zest of sin; and so, when they

have done committing it for themselves, they amuse themselves with other people's. Do you see—She can cram her conscience with Leighton and Baxter: but she must have recourse to the sceptics to feed her intellect; hah, hah! These folks are wiser than the world takes them for, after all—more knaves than fools. If she cannot smuggle a libertine infidel or two into heaven, she will want to come back again to enjoy the exercises of opinion, and freedom of thought!"

I leave it, Mr Listener, with you and your readers to determine whether our Christian lady had or had not provoked this unholy sarcasm. If she herself should read it, it may not be useless to her to know the issue of her conversation.

Yours, Sir, &c. &c.

No. XLIII.

HARVEST-HOME.

> . . . . Oh, how sharp the pain
> Our vice, ourselves, our habits to disdain;
> To go where never yet in peace we went,
> To feel our hearts can bleed, yet not repent;
> To sigh, yet not recede; to grieve, yet not relent.
>
> CRABBE.

MUCH-ADMIRED LISTENER,

YOU have to lament, if not to repent, the modesty of your title; if it has not already cost you many a weary hour, such a one awaits you in reading these my lucubrations; for I feel persuaded, that in your organisation, conscience is too predominant to allow fair play to those keen perceptions, which would otherwise toss aside at the first glance one-half the productions of your correspondents. I am fain to postpone what I really wish to say, for it is a fearful thing to tell a listener, who speaks so strongly and so well, that you do not agree with her. It is in a story about planting thistles, a paper I particularly admire, that I still find within me that I differ from you. The story is perfect; but is the deduction *quite* a fair one, when you consider parents allow-

ing their children to see into the vanities of the world as a distinct scattering of the pernicious seed? I confess, judging by myself (and by what other standard can any of us judge?) I feel strongly that nothing but looking at and handling the vanities and gaieties of this world, can enable us to see through and believe their lightness. It is the lime cast upon the field which soils and disfigures, but soon brightens and strengthens its verdure. Could I imagine myself educating a child—a task so awful as to make one shrink with distrust from every plan ever yet laid down, because of the imperfection of all—I could not answer to myself for the effect it seems to me would be produced by shutting out the world's excitements from a young and active mind. Having once given that mind a high standard, by which to judge itself and others, I should dread it as most dangerous to debar it of the bitter, but useful fruits of experience in folly. Had it been so with me, I am persuaded, that at this moment, although past the age of twenty-five, I should have a restless craving, an admiring, and yet unacknowledged wish, to be initiated, that would be a thousand times more hurtful than the temporary delight, and permanent indifference, that arise out of a close acquaintance with them. I was brought early into the world, and early into a state of responsibility and power, that both restrained and excited me in no common degree: my vanity was continually gratified, and I had keen delight in the indulgence of my

tastes: but with all this, and in the midst of a family party in whom I was blessed indeed, I found myself writing down, out of the fulness of conviction, "that this life, considered without reference to another, was a gift more fraught with pain than pleasure." I never, even in the stillness of darkness, in the thunder-storm, or the extreme of sorrow, have that strong persuasion of the immediate coming of death and judgment, which arises in my mind when I am in a gay crowd; even when I seem, and am, a flattered, pleased, and animated actor in that crowd, still the thought that every one of that number will soon moulder in the grave, haunts me, until I am ready to say aloud, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." When I look at others in the world, I think no one feels like me; and when I look into myself, I feel as if every body must have the same impressions. It may sound like the extremity of vanity, but I am persuaded, that to judge of others by ourselves is the truest charity; who, that has heart and mind enough to feel any thing, will not acknowledge, that not only their most sinful, but their highest, purest, most delicate, and spiritual thoughts, are those which never pass their lips, and scarcely appear in their lives, because they lack the opportunity of proving them, or feel they would be misinterpreted? They are reserved for only one eye, and we seem what others seem to us. Oh! let us believe that such is the true state of almost all these seeming worldlings; nor think, that when the se-

crets of all hearts are laid open, we alone have in that fearful store some which we need not tremble to unfold! But the severe Listener says, I have overlooked what would be the safeguard against even the wish to wander from the straight and narrow way. I acknowledge, with the truest conviction, the necessity of "stretching nature on the cross of Christ;" but it must be, humanly speaking, a voluntary crucifixion—or it will but wither that nature it is our duty to exalt and refine to the highest ends. I know I seem to write and think arrogantly of human nature, my own of course included; and yet it is to its folly and vileness that I trust as the antidote to its influence. And now, earnestly hoping you may never know your impertinent correspondent, I remain your admiring, fearing, and reverencing

QUALIFIER.

When I received the above paper, I was by the sea-side. I read it attentively, and, having folded it up, thoughtfully pursued my walk. I passed the fisherman at the water's edge, waiting the flowing of the tide; but not idly. His children were helping him to unfold and mend his nets, and two or three stockingless brats were wading through the water to unmoor the boat, and steer it as he directed them. I saw, in the hollow of the cliff, a group of gipsies boiling the turnips they had stolen the night before. These, too, were training their children to their own

calling. The little brutes lay squalling and fighting on the pathway; the father bade them with a fearful oath, to cease their brawling, and draw him some sticks from a neighbouring fence. I came to the door of a large barn: a clean and decent husbandman was thrashing out the corn; and his son, with the same hard features as himself, the same nailed boots, and tidy round frock, was at his side, helping, with a lighter flail, the father's labours. I reached the mansion of nobility. I saw the heir, with his reverend tutor at his side, the future dignitary, probably, of the church, engaged in such pursuits, and receiving such accomplishments, as would become the master of that proud domain.

"These people are all in the wrong, then," I said. "Each one is preparing his children to follow his own calling, and fill the station of his fathers, the destiny for which he seems designed. But they take the wrong methods. The honest labourer should apprentice his boy to the rude waters, and let him spend his childhood amid the animating perils of the sea, that he may be fit, in manhood, for the sober drudgery of the day's work, and love the safety of the shore. The fisherman, he should send his brats among yonder trampers, to be reared in idleness, villany, and theft, that he may learn the value of an honest calling, and be fitted for the exertions of laborious life. And the young noble—he, methinks, should serve apprenticeship to all. In the coarse labours and habits of the husbandman, he should

prepare himself for the refinements of his condition, and in the miseries of vicious idleness, get experience of the beauty and happiness of moral elevation. How else should they have a choice? How, but in the experience of vice, can they learn its miseries, of idleness its consequences, of coarseness its disgusts? What, in short, would make a human being fit for any station, but bringing him up in bitter experience of its opposite?"

When I read the above letter first, I had a mind not to insert it, or seriously to answer it. I thought my excellent correspondent was in a worse condition than poor Hodge. She seemed to have taken her thistles into great admiration; and though she had gathered of them hitherto but fading flowers and thorns, was disposed to believe, since the roots were under ground, they might after all be very good roots, and should not be disturbed. I thought, besides, that though I had ridiculed the husbandman who sowed the harvest that he would not reap, if any one had ground, and that ground was his own, and he could please himself, while others gathered in their corn, and filled their garners, his own remaining empty, to stand by, and moralise upon the lightness of the thistle-down, the spiny hardness of the leaves, and fading beauty of the flowers, boasting his experience of their worthlessness—I thought I had nothing to say in this case, why a man should not plant thistles to his dying day. But afterwards there came a thought that checked my mirth, and

seemed to reprove my indifference. I found, that in one respect my correspondent had spoken truth: "The deduction" from the story was "not quite a fair one," for the cases were not analogous. I had supposed the good man's field to be his own; whence, though I deduced his folly in planting thistles where he would gather corn, I yet left him free to choose the harvest he preferred. But if, in fact, that field had been another's, and the possessor held it only on lease or sufferance, till the owner should re-claim it, the deduction should have been other than it was. I consent to amend my story; though I would still avoid discussing what I before supposed to be granted —the general inadmissibility of worldly amusements to a religious life. And for this reason. The subject is discussed every where, and between every body; arguments are worn threadbare, and little good comes of it. The earthly-minded go on with their amusements, not because they know them to be harmless, but because they mean to enjoy them whether they are or not. The pretender to religion talks a great deal against them, not for dread of their unholiness, but because the sacrifice costs less, and shows more, than the abridgement of selfishness in other forms. The child of God leaves them, and forgets them, not because he is scared from his desires by the potency of argument, but because he has no taste, nor time, nor heart, for such vain foolery. This course will continue, I apprehend, after all our discussions. And if there is a class of persons, as

among our younger Christians I believe there may be, who are really wishing to know how to adjust the claims of Heaven and the claims of earth; the love of holiness, with the countenance of sin; the presence of Jesus, with the society of his despisers; the peculiarities of the gospel, with the habits of polite life; the commands of God, with the approbation of the world; destinies entirely opposite, with the least possible division by the way; entire, radical, and eternal difference of principle, with the least possible difference of life and conversation—to these, perhaps, an admonition might be in the stead of argument. You have taken to yourselves a most onerous task; but it is none of Heaven's imposing. God has not required it at your hands. There are commands innumerable to choose between the one thing and the other, but none to reconcile them.

This by the way. My correspondent is not of the number, I believe. Could I even hope, by any argument of mine, to convince her of the erroneousness of her sentiments, if they were only hers, I should still be unwilling to discuss them here. But I am informed, and, indeed, if I did not know it, I should have listened these many years in vain, that she speaks the thoughts of numbers of others, of young females in particular, who mistake feelings for principles, and sentiment for piety; and think themselves very religious, because they sigh over the vanity of earthly things, though they seek them not the less; and shudder at the thought of death and

judgment, though they prepare for them not the more; and in times of depression, take refuge in some idea of God, though they know him not, and serve him not the better. For the sake of these, I have determined on replying to the letter. I do not guess the writer, and if I did, all personality is put aside. I answer to all those who hold a similar language, or cherish the like sentiments, not to my individual correspondent. She will therefore, I trust, forgive the criticism of her words.

My correspondent claims to have the question judged by her own experience, and the effect of vanity and folly upon herself. Is she quite sure she knows herself, and at "past five-and-twenty" has come to the full fruition of her early culture? If so, I will receive her testimony of herself, and fill up the deficient outline as justly as I can. I will suppose her name to be Amelia, and understand that she is now past five-and-twenty. I will suppose that Amelia was "brought early into the world," that is, into fashionable amusements, and the gaieties of life—perhaps as early as seventeen—this allows her full eight years' experience in them. She was handsome, of course, or her vanity would not have been so largely administered to—she was in prosperity, or her tastes could not have been so fully indulged—she was amiable, or she would not have been so happy and so much beloved in her family circle. Every capability of pleasure was thus bestowed on her; and she had the advantage of being allowed to gather unrestrained,

what she considers "the bitter but useful fruits of experience in folly." It is not unfair to assert that she spent the greater part of her time in collecting them. The "continual" gratification of her vanity, and her "keen" delight in the indulgence of her taste, imply that these early years were passed in pursuit of self-gratification in some form or other. Amelia is no uncommon character, and we are in the less danger of sketching her amiss. She was brought up for the world; when presented to it, she found acceptance in its sight; and she has spent the first years of womanhood in doing its pleasure and her own, unarrested by a voice that said, "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth."

And what is Amelia now? After eight years' assiduous labour in folly and fashion's bondage, she questions the value of their wages, and writes down, "out of the fulness of conviction," that "life is a gift more fraught with pain than pleasure." *Blasée* of the gratifications of sense, and familiar, I dare say, with Young's Night Thoughts, Hervey's Meditations, and other good books, she invokes the interest of another world to renew the excitement of feeling this can afford no longer. The conjured spirit, however, proves an importunate adjunct to the still fashionable lady. Not content with its appropriate seasons, "the stillness of darkness, the thunder-storm, and the extreme of sorrow," it follows her to the gay crowd, pictures to her fancy her fair companions mouldering in the grave, sounds in her ear the trumpet-

call to judgment, turns the lightness of comedy into the sublime of tragedy, the thoughtfulness of mirth to the poetry of sentiment. If I misstate the case, Amelia must forgive. It is all she has disclosed. She has told me that when she became dissatisfied with the wages of folly, she forsook its service. She has not told me that thoughts of death and judgment in the crowd sent her to solitude, penitence, and prayer. Would she had told me how many of that giddy crowd were arrested in the dance of folly by her example, and won by her timely warnings, to prepare for the change she so shuddered to think upon! Would that she had said how often and how bitterly before God she mourned her own wasted years and accumulated sins, her Lord's neglected and forgotten service! Then I might have perceived "the usefulness" as well as the "bitterness" of her eight years' harvest. On the contrary, she states the result of all to be "temporary delight and permanent indifference." She justifies the expenditure in folly of five-and-twenty years out of her brief threescore, and she speaks of herself as a "still flattered," still "pleased," and still "animated actor," in the gay crowd. She describes, I fear, but too correctly, the character of her piety—"It never passes the lips, and scarcely appears in the life." And Amelia forgets the word that says,—"These three years have I come seeking fruit, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

This is what Amelia is. May I imagine, also,

what she will be, when her five-and-twenty years are doubled, if neither wrath nor mercy interpose? This reference to things divine, which she takes to be religion, but which is, in fact, no other than sentiment—the *pis aller* of unsatisfied feeling—the last chapter of a long romance, very dull, but necessary, to conclude the story—this will die with the vivacity of youthful feeling: imagination will cease to present its images of mortality; the vivid impressions of futurity will wear fainter and fainter; the chill of advancing age will wither these, as it withers every other growth of feeling—flowers of one root, the sweep of indifference will involve them all. But the sullen root of habit will remain. Folly never was, never can be, its own cure. It were as wise to expect the rugged thistle, by longer growing, should produce us corn. Every indulgence of evil adds to its power, and fastens another fetter on its slave, as certainly as the weed by every blossom multiplies its growth. Pleasures, no longer loved, will be pursued from habit—fashion's drudgery will be done when its wages are denied—the wearied limbs and faded cheek will be exhibited when flattery is silent. If any doubt it, let them look at the septuagenarians of folly, nodding the plumes upon their palsied heads, as it were in insane mimicry of those that to-morrow will nod upon their hearse. Death and judgment, imagination's playthings now, as they approach, will become hideous phantoms, which must be either dreaded or forgotten. A rigid observance of exterior forms, an equivo-

cal profession of religion, perhaps, will take place of extinguished sentiment. And when the secrets of Amelia's heart are opened, that moment so confidently challenged, and the reckoning is demanded for her talents—for fifty years' exercise of physical and mental powers—for the use of prosperity, the influence of beauty, the abundance of domestic blessings—there will be nothing found for God but a few pious sentiments, a few poetic feelings, a few convictions of conscience, just enough to prove she knew the worthlessness of that world whose service she preferred to His. The rest had been expended upon earth and upon herself.

If I have not drawn the character of my correspondent, I have drawn that of thousands. Let it stand as theirs, not hers. If any parent would gather such a harvest, let her sow the ungodly seed. The Listener has not interposed; although, perhaps, he should. Perhaps he should have said that Hodge omitted to consult the tenure by which he held his field, and the forfeiture under which he was bound to cultivate it properly. I can anticipate but one other result of early introduction to the ways of vanity and folly. It has been come to by some—would it might by all! When the harvest time of maturity has come, and the children of godliness have been seen gathering in their store—the stores of a conscience void of offence before God—the Spirit witnessing with their spirit that they are his children—the near prospect of a blissful immortality—the soul's peaceful eleva-

tion above the changes of the world—the sufficiency of bliss without its smiles—while, with treasures like these, the followers of Jesus are seen filling their garners, the disappointed, dissipated child of folly has sometimes looked into her bosom, and found it empty—without present good or future expectation, has looked back upon her past life to see what fruits it could produce, and found none. Now she perceives the cause, and now she embraces the remedy. But, oh! the poverty of these moments—the bitter retrospect of wasted years—the burden of accumulated sin—the inveteracy of habit, returning in spite of every effort to eradicate it. The chains of the world are broken indeed, but they hang clattering about the neck with scarcely diminished weight. Folly takes advantage of its intimacy to gain access to the bosom, and wins with the accents of our native tongue. After a life of thoughtlessness, how difficult to think—how difficult to feel, after the feelings have been blunted and expended—to act, after a life of indolence! Not only can the past years never be recovered, but many a one to come will be expended in painful contention between inveterate habit and determined principle, in joyless and vacillating faith, unsanctified and inconsistent conduct. Such is not the harvest a pious mother desires for her child.

A few things I would say to my correspondent before we part, in affectionate desire for her welfare. She shrinks from every plan of education, because of its imperfections. Here is a system that has no im-

perfections—"Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." I know of no "safeguard from the wish to err." On the contrary, I know that the whole tendency of the heart of man is to evil, from his birth-time to his dying hour; that he can be turned from it only by supernatural power; and if by wilfully exposing himself to temptation, he provokes the withdrawment of that power, he will return to evil as to his own element. I know of no nature of ours which it is our duty to exalt and refine—though I have heard of one we are to mortify and put to death. With respect to "stretching nature on the cross of Christ," I am not sure that I know what it means. But there is another sentence that sounds something like it—this I understand—"The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The religion of Jesus requires the subjection of all earthly and selfish preference, and the conformity of every feeling and faculty to his holy will and service.

No. XLIV.

DISAPPOINTMENTS.

On ne perd pas seulement le tems en ne faisant rien ou en faisant le mal, mais on le perd aussi en faisant autre chose que ce que l'on devroit, quoique ce que l'on fait soit bon.

FÉNÉLON.

It was the law of Egypt that every subject of the kingdom was, under pain, I think, of death, to follow the calling of his fathers. Whether this was a wise law, I know not. But there is another kingdom, wherein all is wise, of which it is a law, if I mistake not the statute-book, that every one should follow diligently his own calling. Of course, it could not be in either of these kingdoms the following events occurred, as taken in short-hand by a Listener, from the lips of the unfortunate narrator:—

"When I first became sensible of religious impressions, I was eighteen years of age. I had been politely brought up, had learned a great deal, and knew but very little—least of any thing, did I know myself. Next to myself, what I knew least of was my fellow-creatures. I had always resided with my grandmother, and had little intercourse but with my

governess, a few distant relatives, and two or three genteel girls of my own standing in society. My grandmother was an old-fashioned Christian. That she was one, the more I learn of religion, the more I am convinced, though at one time I doubted it. She had become so at a time when they were indeed the despised few, or only not despised because they were unheard of: when all they could do for the world was to sit apart and pray for it, and all they could do for themselves was to withdraw from its influences. I speak of a Christian of sixty years ago. When I knew her, she was too old to receive any new impressions. Her mind had but little cultivation. I never saw her read any thing but the newspaper, Baxter, and the Bible. She seldom talked of religion, but she lived it every moment. Of the public demonstrations of piety so prevalent in our time, she contented herself with saying, 'There were no such things in her day.' This retired piety, beautiful as it appears to me in the retrospect, was attended with considerable disadvantage to myself. Very little pains were taken to instruct my mind in the principles which hers reposed in. Having received them without human agency, she, perhaps, conceived it impossible to impart them. An education distinct and separate from the world, was among 'the things not heard of in her day.' I was brought up like other girls, and by other people. Her care was but to pray for me: which she did with unwearied earnestness, in holy trust and confidence, I know most certainly; and to

her prayers, perhaps, the blessings that I received were granted. In her journal I found many an earnest petition for the correction of faults she never reproved in me, and pardon for my iniquities at the time that she seemed to think me all perfection, and allowed me to think myself so.

"When, therefore, I became, on my approach to womanhood, strongly imbued with religious feeling, not having received the impressions from my grandmother, it was not to her I looked for example or advice. I doubted, indeed, the reality of her religion, because it was of a character so different from what I saw elsewhere. Elsewhere, therefore, I sought for counsel. She allowed me to go on unthwarted in good, as before in folly; and I began my course in all the confidence of a spirit yet untried, and all the fervour of, I believe, an honest, though a new-born, purpose. I did not want advisers. As soon as my inclination to seriousness was perceived, I was taken up by some leading people in the religious world, as it is called, and introduced from one to another as a promising character, requiring to be led forward. I was an heiress—nobody knew to what, nor did I—but on some unexplained understanding that I was in a capacity to receive and do a great deal of good, I became a person of importance in my sphere—among people whose attentions to me, whatever may have been their effect, had no motive but to promote my welfare. I was taken from party to party, and church to church, and meeting to meeting, in a per-

petual round of religious dissipation. Nothing could be more delightful to me than this hurry of pious occupation: for, besides that I had a real and ardent pleasure in listening to the things of God, and an honest desire to learn them, there was in it a contrast to the monotony of my home, naturally pleasing to the youthful mind. I had been to a ball about six times in my life; I had yawned through a tea-party about once a fortnight; I had driven round the parks for an hour every day: all the rest of my time I had been thrown upon my own resources, which were few enough, and the society of my grandmother, or that of about half-a-dozen intimates of my own age. But now there was somewhere to go every night—somebody to hear every morning—somebody to see—somebody to be introduced to every where; mingled all with the stimulus of first-awakened feeling, as new as it was delightful; for I was too young to have tasted of the excitements of earthly passion. My dear old grandmother looked on with a surprise that excited my mirth; and with an anxiety, which, though I then perceived it not, I think of now with pain. Sometimes she ventured a complaint that the regularity of her house was destroyed—the family prayer at nine o'clock was unattended, because the servants were out with the carriage—they were sent hither and thither she knew not where—all sorts of people came about, she knew not whom—I was never at liberty to bear her company; or rather to sit silent by her side, which she so called. She never thought

to see such fashionable doings in her house. Still I was to do as I liked; only things were not so in her day, when girls of eighteen stayed at home, read their books, and were happy with their parents.

" This went on a considerable time. But there was too much of the light of truth upon my mind, not to show me, after a while, that, however much I was gaining for myself, I was doing no good to any body else. A spare shilling in the collection-box was all that was rendered for what I considered the much received; and I became uneasy under the first perception, that selfishness, that one great principle of nature's sin, is selfish still, whichever way indulged. I might have taken into account, also, the actual privation and discomfort of my grandmother and her household, as the cost of my indulgence. Eagerly, and I believe again with honest purpose, I began to ask every body what I could do. I saw others doing, why should I be useless in my generation? Alas! had any one of my kind friends looked into my mind, and, seeing how light, how empty, how ignorant it was, advised me to devote the next five years to mental improvement, and the study of myself, what defeat and disappointment had they spared me! But this they did not. My desire to do good was much approved, and many ways were suggested to me. I was taken to see a school, where I found a lady surrounded by fifty neatly-dressed girls, hanging with fixed attention upon her words, gazing on her with mingled reverence and love, their little countenances

seeming to gather the benevolence that beamed in hers. She was above twice my age. A calm and sober serenity of manner, a voice of tender interest, gave force to all she said. The simplicity of her expressions was only equalled by the correctness and carefulness of the thoughts she clothed them in. It seemed that, knowing every thing, she remembered when she had known nothing; and from the depths of experienced truth, could reach the heart that had yet experienced nothing. There was not a whisper among her audience, but when they responded to her questions, and showed, in doing so, the extent and importance of the knowledge she had imparted. My heart burned within me to do the same—to be the instrument of Heaven's mercy to the children of poverty. Why should I not teach? Why should I not have schools? A thousand projects were afloat in my head, and not a single misgiving of my powers was in my heart. I knew I should not be restricted in pecuniary means, and returned home full of elevation in the prospect of being useful. So full, I could not help telling my grandmother I was going to teach a school. She only answered me with something that was not quite a sigh, 'God bless you, dear child, and teach *you* in his own good time.' It must be owned my spirit fell for a moment at this contemptuous speech, as I esteemed it; but my respect for the old lady's piety had long since expired; and my respect for her judgment was ready to follow, whenever it should come in contact with my own. I soon recovered my

self-complacency, and the next day prepared for my task—prepared to teach, at a time when I knew absolutely nothing; not God, for it was but little time that He had been to me even an object of inquiry; not his word, for as yet I had studied it but little; not myself, nor the beings I was to instruct, for the examination of my own heart had made no part of my religious exercises; and in every thing my mind was so uncultivated, and so habitually unexercised, I had no faculty of communicating knowledge, or facility in receiving it. Whether any among those who were my advisers could have perceived this, I do not know. I could not. My grandmother's wash-house was quickly fitted up with forms—children were collected—new books and clean white pinafores were provided for them. All my friends in succession were brought to see my school, and I was kindly congratulated on being the instrument of so much good. The good, however, was the only thing that never appeared—and though I so long expected it would come, I was not so deluded by vanity as to suppose it did. When the novelty was over, the children ceased to attend, though I bribed them with all manner of inducements. When they did come, they made a noise, paid no attention to my exhortations, and never seemed to understand what I said to them. If they had, they had been wiser than their teacher. Still I did my best. I scolded, preached, persuaded, remonstrated; stimulated them with emulation, which

never failed to make them quarrel; and urged them by comparisons, which never failed of making one party arrogant, and the other inveterate. Still for a while I was sanguine. The more difficulty, the more merit in the performance. As fast as my scholars forsook me, I got others; and every moment of time I could command was engrossed with teaching. But after some considerable time the benches thinned —the books wore out—the pinafores were unwashed —the friends ceased to come—and, though I would not own it myself, I was really weary of my task; weary of repeating what none cared to hear, and none remembered. With a poignancy of disappointment equal to the earnestness of my desire to be useful, I was compelled to perceive that the children did not understand any thing better for the time and toil I had expended on them. My heart was very sad under this failure, and my spirit much discouraged. I thought that God refused to bless my undertaking —even that I was not his servant, since he refused my labours. Others' success added poignancy to my mortification, and sin perhaps to my sorrow. My distress was real; and so much was I at the moment humbled by it, it would have been happiness indeed had any one suggested that I might have mistaken my calling, and set myself to teach, at a period when I had better have been gathering in a store of knowledge for future distribution. However much my pride might have been wounded, I should have been

relieved from the apprehension that God disowned my service.

"About this time, my grandmother determined to remove into the country—for her health, she said—but I believed, because she was tired of the disturbance I made in her household economy, and distressed by my perpetual absence from her. A house was taken for a twelvemonth at a watering-place on the coast, whither we removed. I felt little regret at abandoning an undertaking which had cost me so much disappointment. My London society I did indeed regret; but was assured I should find great opportunities of usefulness in my new residence. This consoled me.

"My first acquaintance was with two maiden ladies, advanced in life, and of a station in society lower than my own; but of that solid worth and unpretending simplicity of character which cannot be looked down upon. These worthy women, with means the most restricted, contrived to do an immense deal of good, by personal exertion and the influence they had obtained in their neighbourhood. Every body knew Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—the rich, who always gave money when *they* asked, without much caring what they did with it—the poor, whose troubles found always a compassionate hearing at their door. They might be seen in the morning in grey cloaks and close bonnets, scudding about the streets with baskets in their hands, filling them with contributions at one door, and emptying them with donations at

another. You might find them in the evening in their little parlour in the back street, cutting out baby linen, mixing medicines, or casting up accounts. In every corner was a collecting box—on every table piles of reports, cases of distress, and prospectuses of societies: there was not one, I believe, to which these active women did not send up their yearly pittance of collections. And Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane had always something to sell; something that their active hands—one might have thought they had a dozen each instead of two—had wrought for the advancement of their charities—garters, muffetees, and kettle-holders—a hundred articles, which, if nobody wanted, every body bought, out of respect to the manufacturers. These worthy women became the objects of my admiration—and with reason—for with little more for their whole menage than I could command for pocket-money, they administered to the wants of hundreds, had a blessing under every cottage roof for five miles round, and sent help to the heathen of the equator and the pole. My heart grew sick with sadness when I compared their labours with my own—but there was a remedy—could I not go and do likewise? The resolution was soon taken. I begged my worthy friends to let me assist in all their undertakings, and collect for all their societies, being now a resident in the place, and having nothing to do. They were delighted with the proposal; they had scarcely any assistance; they believed they were not so young as

they used to be; and the place increased every year; a great deal more might be done than they had strength for; nothing could be so acceptable as my services. My name was inserted as collector in all their books, and the necessary credentials put into my hands. And now again my untaught heart beat high with joy at the thought of the good that I should do. One morning as I was packing into my handsome French reticule, pencil, books, reports, &c., my grandmother asked me what I was going about. I answered, that I was going to collect money for the societies. 'Collect money, dear child!' she said—'had you not better give them what money they want and keep yourself at home?—you have more than you know how to spend properly—God bless you in the use of it.'

"I was now nearly twenty. With my profession of folly, I had put aside its garb, as to all affectation of fashion or useless expenditure in dress: but still there was a style in my appearance that is not easily put off, particularly where there are personal attractions and the fresh vivacity of youth. Nothing misgiving of any observations I might excite, I sallied forth, morning after morning: knocked at people's doors—so I had been bidden—asked for the mistress, asked for the servants, asked for the money; quite unembarrassed *at first* in the confidence of my good intentions. But some way or another, I know not how it was, things by degrees went ill. The servants laughed and looked impertinent when they opened

the doors. The ladies within carried themselves haughtily, asked a great many questions I was not prepared to answer, and made objections and insinuations, which piqued my pride, and sometimes provoked my impertinence. On one or two occasions, where the hour of my coming was known, I perceived that preparation was made for satisfying curiosity, which, however gratifying it might be to my vanity, was not at all so to my delicacy. In short, I was as well known in the streets as the twopenny postman, but by no means so well received. With the poor, alas! I had but little success. I was not Mrs Mary, nor yet Mrs Jane. I gave, it is true, a shilling for every penny I solicited, and when this was discovered I got subscribers plenty: but they paid no longer than I gave; they had new wants every time I appeared; and if these were not attended to, it was impossible to give money, they had not enough for themselves; and even if they were, I scarcely had a welcome. When I offered consolation, an eye was turned askance upon my dress—'It was very well for people to talk who had plenty of every thing.' When I ventured admonition, 'Young gentlefolks knew little of what the poor had to go through.' I felt deeply at the time these seemingly hard returns for my intended kindness; but I know now that they were truths. I did not know—I had never suffered—I had never witnessed suffering—I had never even deeply reflected upon it. I knew nothing of its near affinity to vice, and consequently I knew not how to

administer to either. I reproved in the wrong place —I offered consolations unsuitable to the mind that was to receive them. From want, not of feeling, but of knowledge of the human heart, I wounded when I meant to soothe, and was imposed upon and misled perpetually. Besides all this, I know not how it happened, but it always rained or snowed when I went out: not more, I suppose, than it did upon Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—they never stopt, neither would I: but I had been delicately brought up, and was always taking cold. My grandmother became seriously uneasy—my waiting-maid declared that Miss —— had need collect a good deal of money to pay for the refreshing and retrimming of all the bonnets and pelisses she spoiled with rain and mud. At length, it was not till her patience had lasted nearly a year, my grandmother asked me how much in the week I collected. I replied, 'Why, dear grandmamma, as much as five shillings a-week, all in pennies.'—'Well, then, dear child,' she said, 'I do not know what you want with it—there were no such things in my days — but I'll pay the five shillings to keep you at home; and if you add to it all that it costs you, I warrant you will double the sum, and let every body dispose of their own.' Mortified as I was with this balance of account, I could not dispute its accuracy, and was not, I believe, altogether sorry to resign my task. But there was a feeling attending it of deep distress. Again my hope of usefulness had been defeated. Surely I should take my portion

at last with the unprofitable servant, and God would not acknowledge me as his. I poured out my heart, in all its bitterness, to Mrs Mary and Mrs Jane—they did not understand me, either in my reasons for withdrawing, or my distress in doing so—with their usual tone of benevolence, they said, 'Well, well, never mind; God will provide for his own work—young people are apt to get tired—but I should be older by-and-by.' In thus seeming to cast the blame upon me, to which, in this moment of humiliation, I was myself sufficiently inclined, they added poignancy to my regret: one hint, that what was their calling might not be mine, would have relieved it.

"Soon after this I married, and again resided in the metropolis. The circumstances of my married life brought me into a different society from that I had been accustomed to; chiefly of pious and literary men and women of superior and cultivated minds. Among these I first began to feel my own want of cultivation—my absolute ignorance of every thing; my incapability of taking part in the conversation at my table, or even of profiting by it, when it passed beyond the gossip, religious or otherwise, of the day. For though on the subject of religion I had been perpetually and incessantly hearing, I was truly in the condition of those of whom the Apostle speaks—'Ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.' I had been hearing and teaching, but neither studying nor reflecting.

"Of the discussions to which I was now so fre-

quently a party, biblical criticism, and nice distinctions of doctrine, made a considerable part; even the ladies of my society were Hebrew scholars, as they were in all respects highly informed; and frequently and modestly betrayed, rather than exhibited, their knowledge of the original Scriptures. Embarrassed and in despair at being thus unlike to all about me, I recollected that I was not too old to learn, and furnished myself with grammars, lexicons, &c. One morning, as I sat down to my desk in great state, to wait for a master who undertook to give a perfect knowledge of Hebrew in six lessons, my grandmother —she still lived with me—asked what I was going to do. I told her; adding, with great solemnity, that it was impossible to come to the true meaning of Scripture without reading the original—endless errors had been grounded upon mistranslation—it was essential to every one to be able to defend the pure doctrine of the gospel, by an appeal to the Hebrew text. This was the first time, I believe the only time, I ever saw my grandmother angry. All else she had attributed to modern notions and a change of times; but to tell her that one word of her Bible—that very quarto Bible, which, for forty years, had never been left a day unopened—was not right, or could be altered for the better, was to touch her only source of happiness and hope. I cannot bear to think now of the tears I so unnecessarily brought into her eyes. 'Child,' she said, dropping her usual appellative of dear, 'your grandmother

has lived too long. I remember when I was a child upon his knee, my grandfather—and he had heard it from his—would tell me stories of the joy and thanksgiving that were among the godly when the Bible was put into English, that all might understand it—but now, it seems, nobody can understand it but those that can put it back again! May God keep you from delusion!' I smiled at her ignorance, but said not amen to her prayer. My study advanced rapidly; for I was exceedingly quick in learning. I studied hard; made, as my master assured me, amazing progress; and, of course, believed that, at the end of the six lessons, I understood the language, and had only to make use of what I knew. I now ventured to join in argument upon the abstruser points of doctrine. Certain metaphysical questions at that time ran high, and I became a violent partisan—from a real desire, I believe, to advance the truth, but not considering that disputation might not be my calling. I treated those as vulgar and narrow minds, who attempted to lay stress on personal religion, the simplicity of divine truth, and the sanctification of the heart—the commonplace slang of religion, as I called it; and gave my attention only to those who entertained me with ingenious interpretations, nice distinctions, and, as they believed them, deep and comprehensive views. Of these I understood just enough to be misled, and lose in them all cares for what was really important; but by no means enough to appreciate their value, or

judge of their correctness. I learned to talk, however, and I had Hebrew enough to confound all who contradicted me. Say what they would, I said it was an error in the translation—the Hebrew was so and so. I did not wait indeed to be inquired of. I had a real concern for the souls of those who were floundering, as I thought, in vulgar error, and took pains to disseminate my new-learned doctrines; carrying always my Hebrew Bible in my pocket, of which I could yet produce little more than a few peculiar words and passages, on which I rang the changes of my party. I do not know whether I converted any body to my errors—for such they were at last, if not at first—being opinions, of which I saw not the consequences, nor the necessary inferences, nor any thing but the bare statement, and that frequently misapprehended; but I soon perceived that prudent parents did not desire my intimacy for their daughters—sober and devoted Christians said 'Humph!' to my tirades of doctrine, and showed no disposition to talk to me—and men, from whom I was endeavouring to get information, smiled at my production of Hebrew roots, and asked how long I had studied the language—not altogether as if they admired my accuracy. This affected not my vanity, for display had not been my object: but in pursuit of utility and truth, I found myself involved deeper and deeper in confusion, while those whom I desired to benefit became more and more regardless and

suspicious of what I said. And with ample reason —for I did not understand myself the recondite opinions I set forth, and had lost in them all the savour of divine truth. Even the poor whom I visited, wished I would talk to them out of their own Bible, for mine was quite different: and some suggested, that since the Bible turned out to be all wrong, they did not see what was the use of reading it. To myself, this was likely to have been the saddest failure of any. For in the years that I thus occupied myself with criticism and controversy, I neglected my English Bible altogether, and my personal interest in it. My character lost its tone of spirituality, which, if it had never been very deep, had been true and simple. Instead of being enlarged, as I conceived it would be, my mind, small enough before, was contracted and bound down to the system of a party, and the conceits of a set. These having after a time dispersed, or changed their minds, or dropped discussions that had never engrossed them as they did me, I found that all the gain of three or four more years, was uncertainty of faith upon the most simple truths, desuetude of the ordinary means of grace, carelessness of practice, and some certain quantity of Hebrew roots, for which I had no longer any use. Still, as far as I know, my purpose of heart was single. I needed but to see my error to abandon it—to perceive what I thought a better way, and enter upon it. After another season, therefore, of doubt, discouragement,

and almost despondency, I determined to leave study and return to practical utility.

"I was now the mother of several children, and the mistress of a large establishment. Time and experience had given me more knowledge of myself —the society of a pious and well-informed husband had improved my understanding—and since I gave up controversy, I had studied more and prayed more; and the detection of former error had imparted to me a distincter knowledge of the truth, at the same time that my character had gained solidity, and my knowledge of mankind had necessarily increased. It seemed that I was now more capable of being useful; and this was still the predominant desire of my heart. But how to set about it. Providence had indeed surrounded me with duties. I had children to bring up; a household to rule; immortal souls committed to my guidance; and my grandmother, disabled and paralytic, depended upon me for every thing. Still no one suggested to me that my calling might possibly be at home. One came to me and asked me to become a patroness to a society—another begged to put my name upon a committee—a third requested me to be a visitor at an infant school—a fourth wanted me to get up a repository—a fifth to be treasurer of a saving fund—a sixth to be president of a working society—a seventh to be inspector to a tract society—an eighth to open adult schools—a ninth to reform prisons—a tenth to convert Catholics—an eleventh to free slaves—a twelfth—but why go on?

More than a hundred solicitors came to me; each one assuring me, that what she proposed was a field of unbounded usefulness, in which she had exerted herself, she hoped, with the blessing of God, to the benefit of others and her own. And I believe that each one spoke the truth. She had known her calling, pursued it ardently, and obtained a blessing whence she expected it. I loved their zeal, coveted the rich reward of their success, determined to imitate them all, and undertook every thing that was proposed to me.

"And now I was involved in incessant occupation. The days were not long enough for my charitable labours. I was never in my house but when a committee was assembled there. My name was upon every list, and my presence in every place. What good I did, God only knows—if any, He will look graciously on the record He has kept of it. There was good done: but, I often thought, not more than would have been had I not been there. I had no particular turn for business. I had nothing of that strong, hard, bustling character, usually called management. On most occasions I was an important and well-looking cipher, saying 'ay' to what others proposed. My money and my name were all that were really useful, I believe. Or, if otherwise, the good I did I never knew—what I left undone was but too apparent. Having no time to attend to my children, I committed the management of them to others. They had governesses, to whom I left them

with unbounded confidence, till, by accident, I saw something amiss, and then I sent them away; the children got beyond every body's management, and then I sent them to school. They owe not to their mother any thing they know, or are—for what they are not, their mother may be questioned. As I was never at home, my servants were left to their own discretion; I gave them no religious instruction, advice, or superintendence. I gave them no habits of domestic regularity. I know not, in short, how they spent their time, or how conducted themselves. To my husband's society I became almost a stranger, and brought little but discomfort to his home. If he was disposed to communicate, I had no time to listen: if he needed my counsel, I was too busy to attend to him. He could not receive his friends, or must receive them alone, because I was always engaged. He could not have his children, because I was drawing up reports, and could not be disturbed. As he had no participation in my pursuits, and I no longer took any interest in his, sympathy decreased between us; communion of thought and feeling became less frequent; the prayer of each went up to heaven alone; and while he resumed those solitary studies, of which, in the earlier part of our union, he so often communicated the benefit to me, having now no time to learn, I lost the only intellectual, and, I believe I may add, the greatest spiritual advantage, that had ever been bestowed on me. My grandmother—she is dead. The attention of menials, and all that money

can purchase, lightened her declining years—but I had no time to administer to her sufferings. In short, while my name has stood in public as the patron of all good, and been echoed and lauded from institution to institution through the land, the savour of holiness has not characterised my house, nor its peace abode in my bosom. I am now five-and-thirty. The loss of health, from fatigue and irregularity, confines me to the house, and has obliged me to give up all my undertakings. And now it seems to me, that for seventeen years I have laboured, though ardently, in vain. I have succeeded in nothing. The good I have done is known only to God—that which I have left undone looks me every moment in the face, in the disorder of my neglected family, and the sinfulness of my neglected heart."

So reads our narrative. In the few remarks the Listener is allowed to make upon what he hears, I cannot comment on the particulars of the story. I hope there are few so unfortunate: but it is worth attention. All these things mentioned are great and important duties—they are the things of which the Saviour said, "These ought ye to have done, and not left *the other undone*." Each of them, I believe, is somebody's duty; but all of them not any body's. And in this day of pious occupation, it is especially necessary that each one should know his own calling. From the impulse of a good desire on the whole, though not unmixed with the pride of importance, and the love of distinction, there is a great eagerness

to be doing all that we see others do, to appoint ourselves to what Heaven never appointed us, and to engage in a multiplicity of projects without considering our circumstances or capacity. Mean time the duties, less stimulating, and less acceptable to our ardent spirits, that may belong to our home and condition, are distasted and overlooked; and our minds, I fear, too often left waste and uncultured. This needs to be particularly guarded against by the young and inexperienced in the present state of society. It is contrary to the whole bearing of the divine precept. All there is required to be "done in order." Each one is to pursue diligently his own calling. If ministry, on ministering; if teaching, on teaching; he that exhorts, on exhortation; he that ruleth, with diligence. Are all apostles? all prophets? all teachers? We may covet, indeed, the best gifts—though still Paul says, there is a better way—but we must wait till they are bestowed before we attempt to exercise them. An earthly monarch appoints different persons to different offices of his state, according as they are capable: and strange indeed would be the confusion, if each one would appoint himself to all. Yet of such confusion, I fear the kingdom of Christ is in danger, from the misguided zeal of his inexperienced servants. To be the medium of communicating blessings from heaven to earth, is the greatest honour that can be conferred on any human being; and may justly be —nay, must be, if our hearts are right—the first desire of our bosoms. But honours are conferred,

not ravished. Watching for it every where, ready for it any way, and when the finger of Providence points the way, as ready to follow it in meanness and obscurity, as before an approving crowd, our path of usefulness will be shown us, as soon as we are capable of being useful, or worthy to be used. But if, so much wanting in humility as to assume our capability, we take possession of every body's post, follow every body's calling, and restlessly covet every body's success, we shall probably learn it in the bitterness of defeat and disappointment.

No. XLV.

DRESS.

Hélas! ils conservent une estime et une admiration secrète pour les choses les plus vaines, que le monde même, tout vain qu'il est, ne peut s'empêcher de mépriser.

FÉNÉLON.

There are follies and vices to which, however much we may deplore them, we find it but little difficult to ascribe a cause. The pleasure of sin to a corrupted nature, is sometimes clearly obvious, and the fitness of folly to delight a fool, cannot be disputed by any one. When we find the world's proud heroes exulting over vanquished foes, the ambitious vaunting their acquired powers, and the avaricious boastful of their hoards, we feel no surprise—however false their estimate of good, the gratification of the passion is a temporary pleasure. So, to descend to smaller matters, we are not surprised that a vain woman should be gratified by admiration, or an envious woman by the depression of a rival, or an artful woman by the success of her intrigues. Pitiable and disgraceful as these passions are, we perceive the object of desire is fitted to gratify the folly

that pursues it. And before such a gratification can cease to be one, the evil propensity must be itself eradicated. But in my thoughtful wanderings through the world, I have marked one folly, the pleasure of which I have been totally unable to discern. I see it every day, I hear of it every hour, I meet it at every turn, yet cannot find for it a motive or an aim; neither a fitness to gratify any known feeling in the bosom of many who pursue it. I mean the love of dress. So far as dress can improve our personal charms, I can understand it; for then it gratifies the desire of admiration, and to a limited extent is not blameable; for personal attractions are the gift of Providence, and, therefore, to be estimated in due proportion to their worth. But the love of dress exists equally where no such result is expected: age and decrepitude cannot extinguish it —I have observed it in excess, where there was not an expectation nor even a desire to be seen—nay, I have known it to pursue the miserable invalid to her death-bed, amid the full consciousness that earthly admiration was no more for her. And if it be so, that it is without reason, aim, or motive, it must surely be of weaknesses the weakest, of follies the most foolish. And yet it is a weakness—for we hesitate to call it vice—the most prevalent in every class of society, the most costly in money, time, and thought; and, strange to say, most obstinately outliving, in the serious and the sensible, every chastened and subjected passion.

The question naturally suggests itself, why is it so? Is it the result of education and habit, or of nature? Facts sufficiently attest, that it is inherent in our nature, or, at least, that we are all by nature prone to imbibe the disposition. Why else does the savage, who gives no heed to the comforts of his rude dwelling, or the cleanliness of his voracious meal, delight to deck his hair with coins, and string buttons for his sable bosom? We feel little disposed indeed to blame or to wonder, that where all higher gratifications are unknown, where minds are uncultivated, and objects of desire are so few, and time and thought so much disoccupied, the ornamenting of the person should be so high a source of interest. But with us it will scarcely be urged in excuse for this folly, that it is a natural propensity. It is the business of education to raise us above the propensities of an uncultured state; to afford us higher enjoyments, and more worthy objects of pursuit; to overcome, not to encourage nature's weakness.

Meditating all this, I lately set myself to see which way tend the education and habits of our females of the present day; and why, if to the right, they have so little success in subduing this low taste. I passed over, though not unobserved, the appearance of this propensity in the lower classes. It is cultured even there, and has ruined thousands. The foolish mother spends her ill-spared pence to purchase a bead necklace, and does not fail to impress on the child the pleasure of putting it on for the first

time. The dirty school-girl, uncombed and unshod, sticks a faded flower into a ragged bonnet, and exults over her companions in ideal splendour. A little older, and she spends her scanty wages in Sunday finery, and goes without decent and necessary clothing. A little older still, and her wages will not suffice the growing desire; and theft, and iniquity, and final ruin, are in ten thousand cases to be traced to this destructive propensity. But while it is the duty of every one, by every possible means, to discourage this ruinous inclination in those of the poor whom they can influence, I must confess, I find it not so surprising in their uncultured minds, and low enjoyments, as among some in whom I am obliged to see it. So I passed them over hastily, to pursue my researches in a higher sphere.

I was on a visit, in what is termed a genteel neighbourhood, within ten miles of London, where the society was sufficiently numerous to afford variety; and yet so small as to induce the congregating of persons very unequal in rank and fortune; and also to enable me and every body else to know who every body was, what every body did, and what every body had to do it with. Among what were considered the visitable people of the neighbourhood, that were one or two persons of high rank and acknowledged fortune. Of these I have nothing to say. The splendid jewel that glittered on their bosoms, nature's own workmanship, seemed but the proper appendage of their rank; the pearl and the

diamond appeared to me as much designed for their brows as the diadem for the prince that wears it; I saw no reason why they might not wear them as they wear their titles, a thing of course, that costs them neither care, nor time, nor thought, nor any thing but that which Providence had abundantly bestowed, and it was their right and duty to distribute. So of their rich and varied dresses. I thought how many thousand beings, who might else have starved, had gained in preparing them an honest and a cheerful maintenance. While the willing finger plied the needle, or twisted the swift bobbins, many a mother's heart was lightened at the thought that, now work was plenty, her babies need not starve. The cost of these superfluities, given without an exchange, could not have afforded such extensive benefit. While their charity fed the poor in vicious and destructive idleness, numbers now rising into opulence by successful trade, but for the superfluous expenditure of the rich must descend to poverty, and share their alms. Here then was neither sin nor folly, as it seemed. Of course, these ladies spent on their dress no more than they properly could spare. Of course, no debts unpaid, and just demands evaded, and claims of benevolence refused—or injured fortunes, or impoverished families, or oppressed dependents—of course, none of these things would have attested, had I enquired, that what I took to be the proprieties of station, was no other than the very

weakness I had come in search of—a ruinous and excessive love of dress.

In restless and hopeless competition with these, there was a long list of persons, neither absolutely rich, nor absolutely poor, who, thanks to the knowledge of other people's affairs that circulated through this candid district, I was very certain could not pay the dressmaker to supply all the thought, and labour, and ingenuity, that were apparent in their wardrobe, more especially among the younger part of the community. "Whence comes it then?" I thought. But in this sort of community there is little need to think, or even to ask, for all is quickly told. "Your daughters were handsomely dressed last night," said Lady A. "Yes," replied Mrs B.; "and I assure you the whole was the product of their own industry. They were up till two o'clock the night before to finish their dresses. These things cost my daughters much trouble; but we cannot afford to purchase such dresses." I was beginning to consider what necessity there was for such dresses—for I remembered that the Miss B.'s had been more elegantly dressed than most of the ladies in the room—when my gentle Mrs B. answered this doubt also.—"Did you observe Miss C. last night? Though dressed so plainly, no one looked so lovely, or was so much admired. She tells my girls she has not time to make her dresses, and can only afford to purchase the plainest that can with propriety be worn in the company she keeps. But no ornament could have made her more engaging." So

then, I considered, by this good-natured mother's own confession, and I remembered to have thought the same, it had not been necessary for the Miss B.'s to lose their sleep in the service of their persons: and I resolved to observe further the habits and occupations of these parties; one of whom was obliged to make what she could not purchase, and the other to go without what she had not time to make.

In my frequent visits to Miss C., I found her and her sisters always active and always well employed. I heard not a word about gowns, or bonnets, or trimmings, or flouncings, but I did frequently see them at work; and by the form and texture of the garments they were making, I perceived they had time to work for others, if not for themselves. I had also, on many occasions, seen them working for themselves; yet, while doing so, they were usually conversing of other matters; there was an appearance of brevity, unconcern, and simplicity, in the performance of the task, which showed it was not that on which their hearts were fixed, or their thoughts engaged, but a duty or a necessity cheerfully acquiesced in. I never saw them slovenly in their appearance, or dressed in bad taste: but there was little variety in their dress, and little appearance of contrivance or ingenuity. I never saw five rows of trimming where two would have done as well, or an embroidered frill where a plain one was absolutely unobjectionable.

I found the Miss B.'s very little inferior in most

respects to the young ladies with whom I was comparing them. They were sensible, amiable girls, with persons equally agreeable, and minds probably not less cultivated; for they had been brought up with the same care, and neither party had long had the disposal of their own time. But go when I might, late and early, morning, noon, and night, the Miss B.'s industry was in full exhibition. And all their powers of — mind, I was going to say, but rather of tastes and fancy, were in constant action in this interesting service. Such endless consultations, such debatings about shapes and colours, such eagerness for new patterns and new fashions, such doing and undoing, planning and counter-planning—what could be thought, but that the Miss B.'s dress was the main object of their existence? We have heard of the industry of the ant and the bee; but the Miss B.'s might shame them all: for when the ant has built his little house, and laid up his store, he reposes from his toil; when the bee has gathered honey through the summer, he passes the winter in idleness: the Miss B.'s labours were never at an end; the summer sufficed not to prepare the winter's stock; and the winter was too short to make ready for the summer. What they gained as the reward of their industry, I was not able to learn. They were better dressed, undoubtedly, than the Miss C.'s; but I never heard that they gained one friend the more, that their society was the more desired, or that any body loved them the better. What they lost, I know.

They lost the invaluable hours of youth and life, so rapidly escaping from their hold to be no more reclaimed. They lost the pleasures of mental improvement, and rational and useful avocations. They lost caste, as sensible, agreeable women—for when the habits and pursuits are trifling, the mind will grow trifling too; and the conversation will not be above the level of the mind. Above all, they lost the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," which is the rich reward of all who have rightly used the talents committed to their care.

If any think I have drawn an extreme case, I do not mean to say that all the young ladies in the neighbourhood of C. spent all their time, and all their thoughts, and all their money, upon their dress. Some found that out of threescore years and ten, two-thirds, or the half, might be sufficient to provide their body's habiliments—some kept up an honourable struggle between duty and inclination, to save a pittance now and then for better purposes—and some did certainly seem to know, that though it was the most important business of life, their attention might at intervals be lawfully diverted into other channels. If any young lady feels that it does not apply to her wholly, she may consider if it does not so in part: and she may do well to consider also the rapid growth of folly, and that what begins but in an idle habit, may become a resistless propensity.

It may be further objected, that it applies only to people of fashion, or to those we comprise under the

more extensive term of people of the world. To this I can only say, I wish it were so; but I am sorry to know it applies no less in the household of the frugal and industrious tradesman—it applies in the most retired paths of domestic life—in the chambers of poverty, sickness, and privation—to the professors, not seldom, of a religion that renounces the vanities and follies of the world. Let me not be understood to say that religion interferes in this, or in any thing, with the distinctions and proprieties of wealth and station. It does not require of the gentlewoman to be dressed like a peasant or a housemaid, nor in any way to mark herself by an eccentric departure from the proprieties of the station in which Providence has placed her—there may be as much love of distinction in this, as in its opposite excess. But there is inconsistency in the love of dress, and eagerness about it, and time and pains spent upon it, that are seen to survive all other adherence to the laws of fashion.

And if I have rightly spoken of the evil, where is its cause, and where its remedy: I have already said, I believe we are propense by nature to this folly; and, instead of avoiding its growth, we culture it, we teach it to our children as duly as their creed. The nurse talks to the baby of her pretty new frock, long before the baby knows what she says: and, a little later, appeases her temper and her tears by the pleasure of putting it on, long before she could know it was a pleasure, if she were not told so. The

mother holds out the promise of a new sash or a new trimming, as a bribe or a reward for good conduct. The no wiser friends come in to assist them with birthday presents of trinkets, buckles, and bracelets; and no pains are spared to impress on the children the happiness of wearing these things, and of being seen to wear them. Now it is certain that, in these early years, what we are persuaded to think an enjoyment, soon becomes one; and, in little more, an habitual desire. And to what purpose is all this? Might not children be as well dressed without hearing of it? Might not the presents and rewards be something to use, or to play with, or even to look at, so it did not encourage so foolish and irrational a propensity? And, as they grow up, might they not be accustomed to dress themselves with good taste and propriety, as a thing of course, without making it a subject of pain and pleasure? I have heard some mothers—after spending whole days in ornamenting a child's dress, consulting over it, talking about it, and admiring it in her presence—when it came to be put on, and the little creature's eyes began to sparkle with delight, very sagely desire her not to be vain, it did not signify how she was dressed, so she was a good girl. Did the child believe it? She must have more than infinite credulity if she did. On the contrary, the child knew well enough that it was because it was thought fitted to excite exultation, that she was cautioned against feeling any. Had she

heard nothing about the matter from first to last, she would probably not have thought of it at all.

But whatever they have been taught to think, my young friends may rest assured that their dress is not a proper subject of eagerness, care, or pleasure. I do not tell them it does not signify how they look or what they wear. It signifies a great deal that every one should be as genteel, neat, and agreeable in their appearance, as their situation will allow. And whether their personal attractions be many or few, it signifies that they wear with simplicity what is graceful and becoming. All this may be done without liking it, thinking about it, or talking about it; and all beyond this is a degradation of their character and powers as rational, intellectual, and immortal beings; and, worse than most other follies, it answers no purpose whatever. If they mean it to make them look better, it does not—if they mean it to make them more highly estimated, it does not—if they mean to pass this waste of time and thought upon the world and themselves for the virtues of industry and economy, alas! what will they think of the mistake, when, their years told out, and time about to be no more, they look back and say, "Ten hours, eight hours, six, five of each one of my numbered days have I expended in clothing and adorning my body, now about to perish, naked and loathsome, in the dust."

No. XLVI.

AN ALLEGORY.

. . . . And the illustration that has been given here of the mingled grace and majesty of God, will never lose its place among the themes and the acclamations of eternity.

Dr. Chalmers.

Walking, one noontide, silent and alone, and something oppressed by a still and sultry atmosphere, I laid myself down upon a mound of grass beneath the shelter of a tree; and, while all around me was sunshine and tranquillity, most strangely betook myself to think of tempests and the storm. Fleetly and prompt the consciousness of all things present passed from my mind. I no longer perceived the sun riding in mid-day splendour through the cloudless heavens, nor heard the rippling of the stream that stole through the herbage at my feet. My senses became absorbed in the distant wanderings of my mind, and imagination carried me, I know not whither, and say not how, to some far region, where I either saw, or dreamed, or feigned, or fancied, whichever may seem most probable, the following moving incident. I am

not without hope, that my readers may find the interpretation of it, without the aid of the Babylonish Magi.

In idea, I had joined myself to a company of men who were walking blythely between the overhanging cliff and the waters of the ocean. The tide was out, the road was broad and smooth: flowers bloomed fair on it on every side: the sun, scarcely yet beginning to decline, veiled at intervals its splendours behind fleecy clouds, appearing and disappearing as they flitted past him, giving increased beauty to the scene by the rapid interchange of light and shadow. Large companies of men were disappearing in the distance before us; but as the road had many windings, and a pale blue mist was on the air, we could distinguish little of their forms, and nothing of the issue of their journey. Behind us, too, as far as eye could reach, there were others advancing by the way we came. But the party to which I had joined myself was small; I listened attentively to their discourse, and soon perceived there was a dispute amongst them as to the road they were to take.

" Pause yet a moment," said one, whom, from his discourse, I supposed to be Prudens; " it is well, at least, that we consider of our path, before we go too far to retreat, if we be wrong. It is true here is space enough, and a fair beaten way. But yonder murmuring tide will briefly steal back upon us. This cliff, too, that bounds us on the other side—we might ascend it now, but it seems to me to become more

steep and difficult as we advance. What if, as night approaches, and the sun declines, we be enclosed in some dread pass, where nothing can save us from the ingulfing water?"

"It is not very likely," said Rationalis. "Why should a road be made so smooth and pleasant if it is not to be trodden? Most clearly toil and care have been spent in making it, and nature has delighted to adorn it. Yonder, too, if I mistake not, are the distant towers of our future home. Far on, it is true, and scarcely visible, but so exactly opposite, that it were folly to turn aside and seek another path, when one so open and direct is lying here before us."

"Wise men are ye, doubtless," said Audax; "but, prithee, stay us not to listen to your doubts. If it be so that the night is coming, why, even let us make our way while it is day. They who go boldly forward, are more likely to reach their goal, I ween, than they who loiter here to talk of it."

"You may do even as you will," rejoined Frivolus. "I care little for the beginning or the end, since the midway is thus delightful. I mind not very much if it please you to stay here, at least till I have culled these flowers so beautiful."

But, while some doubted, some trusted, and some trifled, I perceived that they all continued to go forward, without any effort to find another path. Prudens went sighing on, with many a prophecy of future danger: Rationalis ceased not to argue on the impossibility of any such danger existing: Audax

continued to deride them both, and Frivolus was too busy with his flowers to give heed to any thing. But however much divided in opinion, and disposed to argue, they were perfectly agreed in practice; for all went blithely forward. It was now I first observed among them one whose appearance was strangely different from the rest. While all beside were smiling, the deepest shade of sorrow hung upon his brow. The subdued and sober stillness of his walk was strongly contrasted with the airy lightness of his companions. There was in his countenance an inscrutable expression of mental anguish, veiled, but not hidden, by a smile of patient acquiescence. The sigh that he heaved not, seemed imprisoned in his bosom only to burst it the more surely. The tear that fell not from his dimmed and sunken eye, was as if suspended there, lest the shedding of it should relieve his anguish. He was not old, and yet there were lines of more suffering in his countenance than could be crowded into two-score years. The swollen lip and pallid cheek of careful watchfulness, the languor and exhaustion of a body spent and over-worn by too much endurance, were strangely intermixed with an air of calm and firm determination, that seemed preparing to meet another blow. I marvelled much what manner of person this might be, that looked so sorrowful when all around were gay—that seemed as if he had taken to himself the miseries of them all, and, like the packhorse of some lightsome troop, was bearing the burden of which each one

had made haste to rid himself. His soft, submissive eye was for the most part bent upon the ground. I should have thought him indifferent to what was passing round him, had I not observed that he looked sometimes towards the cliff with anxious earnestness, as if measuring its growing height, and sometimes towards the sea, now rapidly approaching. I even fancied there was an expression of growing apprehension, as he watched its progress. And then he looked at his companions as if he would have spoken, but knew not how to gain a hearing. And indeed it was not easy, for they were vastly talkative and busy, one with the other, and paid no more attention to him than if they knew him unworthy of regard. "Do they really know this?" I considered within myself; for else it might seem that his sorrow, at least, should move them to compassion. Since he has travelled thus far in their company, he cannot be unknown to them: and yet he walks, of all contemned and disregarded, as if he were a stranger, and alone. I would, at least, that he might speak."

And scarcely had I formed the wish, when I saw the Man of Sorrows advance more closely towards his blithe companions, from whom he had walked hitherto some little space apart: and with a voice that seemed to issue from the bottom of a breaking heart, "Pause here a moment, travellers," he said, "and list you to my words." I waited the effect of this address—but no one paused, and no one listened; while the pensive stranger continued to regard

them with an air of anxious and alarmed solicitude. And now I thought his pallid countenance grew almost beautiful by the love, and tenderness, and pity, that lighted up his features. "Pause, travellers," he repeated in a louder tone, "for danger cometh upon us as a thief in the night, and no man heeds its coming." Eyes were now turned upon him, as if content to hear—but scorn and derision were in all of them, and no one slackened his pace. The Man of Sorrows spoke—"Travellers on a road of which ye know not the dangers or the end, list to the voice of one who takes care for you, though you take none for yourselves. Ye are bound, ye say, to yonder fair city, whose towers scarcely yet are visible in the distance; but this is not the way. Your senses deceive you. There is between us and our distant home a pass, which no man ever yet has crossed. Full well I know the spot. The darkening cliff hangs frowning over it, bare and inaccessible to human footstep. The boiling surge breaks on the rocks beneath, and fills up the cavern many a fathom deep. The seamew scarcely dares to build his nest upon the heights, lest the tempest rock his cradle to the deep. No vessel ever cast an anchor there, or ventured near to rescue them that perish. Of all who go that way not one returns; for, ever as the rising tide flows in upon their path, and closes their retreat, those who are nigh to that tremendous passage go into it, and perish. Be warned while it is day, for the night cometh, in which no man can

escape." And he lifted up his humid eyes, as if to see how far the daystar had gone down; but there were many hours yet before its setting. The party marked it too, and smiled. "I know not," said Audax, "why we should mar the pleasures of the day by thinking of the night. When the danger is at hand, it will be time enough to think of an escape. Methinks thy malice envies us our present good, since thou art so eager to empoison it with fear. Are we to turn us from our beaten course, because a soured and distorted fancy sees ills that no man besides thee ever told of? We go the way our fathers went before us, and doubtless shall rejoin them where they are. And yonder multitude, still moving in the distance—are they, too, all deceived, and only thou so wise? How camest thou by thy knowledge?" And he turned himself away with a sneer, and listened no more to the discourse.

"Thou art a fool," said Rationalis; "for, unless thou hast been there, how canst thou know the issue of the path? And if thou hast, there is some retreat, it seems, since thou hast found it. I can see much to prove that this should be our path, and only thy single word to say us nay. As wise men, therefore, it behoves us to take the side of probability; to be guided by the things we see, and not to be diverted from our purpose by fanciful representations of what, by thy own confession, no man who has tried it e'er returned to tell." And he looked on the admonitor

with the contemptuous pity of one who waits an answer to what he believes unanswerable.

Frivolus looked up with a smile; but, not exactly understanding the matter in dispute, and concluding it was no business of his, left them to settle it as they might, and returned to his amusements.

But Prudens drew closer to the side of him who warned them, and seemed disposed to listen to his counsels. "Knowest thou, then," he said, "a safer and a better path? For ere we quit the one we are pursuing, it befits us that we find another. Well I see we walk between two barriers, that may become impassable; the way already narrows, and I am not without my apprehensions. But where is the remedy? Path see I none but this."

"There is a remedy," replied the Man of Sorrows. "I know a path—it is steep and difficult indeed, and trodden but by few. No man will exchange for it this smooth and flowery way, if he believe not that destruction waits him here. Yonder it winds between the crevices of that tall cliff. We shall find many openings to it as we proceed, but each one becomes more difficult than the last, and if we go too far, we may seek for it in vain. Could we but reach the summit of the cliff, the way, though stony, is secure, and the prospect beautiful."

"We should do well to abide thy counsel," replied Prudens, "if what thou sayest be true. And if I were but sure of it, I would not hesitate to leave

all and follow thee. But the path you bid us to, looks gloomy and little promising; nor perceive I well why such a one should be the only way to the place we seek. He who invites us thither would surely make it more accessible. I almost dispose to leave the company and go with thee; but they will mock us, and with reason, should it appear we have taken unnecessary trouble, and gained but toil and deprivation for our pains. Better that we be not rash, but try a little how this path may bear." And so he betook himself to other matters. And they all with one accord turned their backs upon their monitor, and forgot at once his warning and himself.

And I looked if in his patient eye there was a gleam of anger for their scorn. But no. A thicker cloud of sadness did indeed pass over it—he smote upon his gentle bosom, and looked up to heaven—but not as if he asked a curse upon their folly. I could rather fancy that every movement of his quivering lip was an aspiration for mercy on their heads. Mean time the tide arose. Already the dashing waters thundered on the shore; the sun was going down, and the fast-gathering clouds threatened to extinguish his departing beams even before their setting. The party had gone far upon their way, and seemed but less sensible of danger as it approached them nearer. I saw the poor despised one pause a moment, and look earnestly behind him. I, too, looked backward, and perceived the waters had already overflowed some portion of the way we came, so as to make return

impossible. The rocks had become almost perpendicular, and while I followed each movement of his eye, again directed forward, I perceived a passage very much like the one he had described. He saw it too. His dimmed eye kindled at the sight, and, with more vehemence than before, he rushed forward into the midst of his companions. "Travellers, brethren, friends, I do beseech you hear me! The moment is come. Destruction is upon the heads of all of you—another instant, and it falls. A few minutes more, and the tide overflows this path—a few yards farther, and there is no access to the heights—already retreat is cut off from behind you. If you go forward, you must perish. Believe, and you may yet be saved—reject my counsel, and you die."

But they all by this time had grown hardened in their course; they were weary and indisposed to effort. They had heard these threats so often, that they were to them as an idle tale. And now grew they angry at what before they mocked, and "Cease thy prating," they exclaimed. "We have heard thy ravings till we are sated of them. Mile by mile thou hast rung these changes in our ears. Let us at least hear something new, if that we needs must listen to thee. Despite thy prophecies and thy prayers for our destruction, we have come on our way in peace; the end is even at hand, and thine eyes shall feast not in the sight of our destruction."

He answered, "Revile me as you will—heap scorn and contempt upon my blameless head—let me be,

as I have been, the outcast and the scorn of all men —trample me under your feet as a despised thing— I bear it all, so you but let me save you. Escape, while there is yet a moment, and do with me even as you will. A hundred yards forth, and your doom is fixed for ever. Say, will you yet go forward?"— "We will go forward," they replied. "We see as well as thou dost the pass thy cowardice fears. We see the tide has crossed the path before us—but still it is smooth and shallow. We can ford it. And what though yon bold projecting rocks hide something from our view, we believe not that danger is beyond. We are resolved to try it."

The Man of Sorrows heard. An agony of conflicting feelings rent his withered form. He clasped his hands upon his bosom as if waiting for power to perform what already he resolved. The calm composedness of grief subdued, gave place to the struggle of despair. His forehead bathed itself with sweat— his eye was swollen with anguish, and in the attitude of one who must, but cannot, he stood as if irresolute. 'Twas but a moment, and, with the step of one who dooms himself to perish, and goes forth to effect his purpose, he placed himself in front of the advancing group, and, in a voice that startled them to compliance, he exclaimed, "Stand, travellers, a moment, for you must. I warned you long, and ye refused to listen. I entreated you, and ye answered me with scorn. Had I not loved you, I had left you to your fate, and saved myself without you. But neither could your

slights repulse me, nor your wrongs offend. For every blow you struck at this unsheltered bosom, I gave you back a sigh of pity and of love—such love as ye shall witness ere we part. I tell you this path is death, and you believe me not. Be it so. I have shown you the danger; I have shown you the escape; I have reasoned with you, besought you, prayed for you. All is in vain, and there is but one way left. Pause here a moment where you are, and let me try that dreadful pass before you. If I perish not, go on your way in peace, and leave me for the madman and the fool you think me. But if I die in the attempt—if, in yon dark waters, ye esteem so shallow, ye see me struggling in the grasp of death—if ye see, as ye stand here in safety, the ingulfing chasm close in upon the earthly form of him whom ye despise—O then! it is all I ask of you to requite the sacrifice, it is all I ask in payment of my love, believe the danger, and escape while it is day."

The travellers stood fixed in mute amazement on the spot. The devoted being advanced to where the waters closed upon the rock. Turning one last, tearful look on those who obstinately had doomed him thus to perish, and spending all that remained to him of life in prayer to Heaven for them, "Believe, and be ye saved," he said—and plunged into the waves. A moment he struggled—a moment and he was gone.

No. XLVII.

SARCASM.

On ne recontre que trop souvent dans la société de ces esprits malfaisants, qui déchirent par instinct, mordent par habitude; et qui, pour un bon mot, se font un jeu cruel de trahir la confiance, d'outrager l'amitié, de critiquer le pouvoir, et d'insulter au vrai mérite.

BOUILLY.

THERE are cases, I fear, where ill-nature, a deliberate desire of giving pain, an envious wish to depreciate what we cannot reach, expends itself in bitter and indiscriminate sarcasm. These cases are beyond our reach—the curse of Ishmael is upon them—their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them. The mischief is in the depth of a malignant heart, and Heaven alone can mend it. Doubtless, there are others in whom this practice arises from a wish to shine, a settled purpose of exhibiting a peculiar talent; which is certainly not wit, but near enough approaching it to be so called, and in itself sufficiently entertaining. These, too, we must leave. If they like the applause of the world better than its love, its laugh better than its approbation, they must take their choice. But I have

met with many jesters of this kind, in whose bosom no malignant passion could be sheltered, and in whose heart, I hope and believe, no desire of applause at others' cost could be indulged. In these I should consider it a natural trait of character; continued for want of reflection on its dangerous and unholy tendency, or, perhaps, from the difficulty of subduing a late discovered evil.

These, I would hope, might be prevailed upon to consider the mischief of this thoughtless indulgence of a natural humour.

But we must leave the scrutiny of motives to Him who knows; and to that self-examination I would strongly urge on all who are conscious of the practice. Whencesoever it arises, it is a habit the most destructive of all affectionate communion, all rational conversation, and all religious sobriety of mind—the enemy at once of piety, taste, and feeling. I would rather take for my companion the dullest spirit that ever hung upon my hands, than be doomed to the society of one of these eternal jesters. Those at least would allow me so much enjoyment as I could find elsewhere, if they could provide me none. But these—whatever is beautiful in character, in nature, in works of taste, in the productions of intellect, they spoil me the enjoyment of, by obtruding on my attention some ludicrous imagination of their own, some mockery of defects that may or may not exist; affording me a little mirth in exchange for the mind's best and highest gratifications. Would that the molesta-

tion of these living Travesties ended here! But it does not. The pain they give to those who are present, is perhaps not very considerable. The weak and timid only are susceptible of these sallies—not the less, but rather the more, inexcusable on that account. Sensible minds care very little about the matter; and if they happen to be fond of mirth, would as soon be made to laugh at themselves as at any body else. But the injury they do the absent is considerable. It is not possible to measure the unperceived influence of such sallies on the opinion one person forms of another; or to calculate the impressions remaining from them on the mind, without our being conscious whence they came. Surely this is a grave consideration. Would those whose benevolent minds are busied in administering comfort to humanity, who desire to show their love to God whom they have not seen, by every evidence of love to their brethren whom they have seen, and who would not, for any selfish gain, deliberately wrong the lowliest child upon earth—would these like to discover that they have robbed the lonely of a friend, have winged the shaft of malice against the defenceless—have made the full cup of sadness to run over but one added drop—perhaps have overborne with shame some contrite spirit, or brought contempt on some struggling child of God? They may never discover it. They may never know it, until those books are opened. But for a little mirth, for a merit of a little brilliancy, will they take the risk?

Would that the evil stopped even here. But there is one character of sarcasm, the prevalence of which has much dwelt upon my mind, waiting the opportunity of alluding to it in these papers. I speak of the habit of ridiculing the professors of religion, and especially its ministers. From the world we expect this. We know whence it arises, and what it means; for we know that when the voice, or manner, or other peculiarity of the minister are sarcastically noticed, the laugh excited is intended to fall upon the doctrine he preaches. But young people who thus amuse themselves, without any sinister intention, are little aware, I believe, of the injury they do others, and more particularly themselves. It is perfectly indecent, the manner in which, at the very doors of the sanctuary, you may hear them make mirth of the reader's or the preacher's peculiarities. There are those among my acquaintance whom I carefully watch out of the church, before I leave my seat, lest I should meet them in the aisles, and have every serious impression dissipated by some sarcastic mimicry of the preacher's tones and expressions. And many, many times, at the dinner table, or in the evening circle, have I sat with painful sadness, listening to the exaggerated statements, the sarcastic criticism, with which the Sabbath service was reviewed—not by enemies—not by disapprovers—but by those who should, and who did, set the highest value on what they heard.

Nor is it persons only. The things of God, reli-

gion itself—they do not mean it, I trust—but religion itself is not too sacred for the blight of their unhallowed jesting. I have the misfortune to have some friends, whose good feeling towards religion I should be sorry to doubt, who never mention it without the same play of words they accustom themselves to use in every thing: not seldom, I grieve to say, the words of Scripture itself, so travestied as to excite a smile at, if not against, the most pious practices and exalted truths; the objects, I really believe, of their reverence, as much as of my own. Could they know how the more serious and deeply feeling bosom shudders at that venturous sport—how the sacred words pronounced in ludicrous association, jar the heart that has been used to hear in them the language of its intensest feelings—surely they would blush and be ashamed for their unholy mirth. I would give instances of what I mean, but I fear to seem personal. Many are in my recollection; and may come, possibly, to the recollection of those who read. If it should be so, I am persuaded they will receive the Listener's affectionate remonstrances without resentment. This mirthful fancy, when united with an amiable disposition, is very entertaining. There are ways in which it may be very innocently indulged: for never was religion an enemy to harmless mirth. There will be occasions in which it may be even usefully exercised, and prevail where reason cannot. But in things sacred, in things serious, in things divine—towards persons who should be sacred

for the things' sake, it can never be harmless. These jesters are little aware of the effect of each ludicrous association on the weak and vacillating mind; and the unconfessed gratification and encouragement afforded by them to spirits profane and worldly. Nor are they more aware of the injury their own minds suffer from this indulgence. They may not know it, but they cannot name a thing irreverently without lessening their reverence for it; they cannot allude to things serious without seriousness, but they become less important in their estimation. And surely they might be aware that the minister, or other servant of God, whose defects and peculiarities they are accustomed to ridicule, cannot retain an influence over their minds—no small consideration, when it is through the medium of his servants our Lord so generally dispenses the influence of his grace.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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